DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 354 191 SO 022 717

AUTHOR	Brown, Sally, Ed.; Riddell, Sheila, Ed.
TITLE	Class, Race and Gender in Schools. A New Agenda for Policy and Practice in Scottish Education. Practitioner MiniPaper 12.
INSTITUTION	Scottish Council for Research in Education.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-947833-68-4; SCRE-Pub-113
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	87p.; Papers from a Round Table Conference Organized by the Educational Institute of Scotland (Scotland, United Kingdom, November 1991).
AVAILABLE FROM	Scottish Council for Research Education, 15 St. John Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8JR Scotland, United Kingdom.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cultural Differences; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Foreign Countries; Racial Bias; *Racial Relations; Sex Bias; *Sex Fairness; *Social Differences
IDENTIFIERS	*Scotland

ABSTRACT

The Educational Institute of Scotland, a trade union representing approximately 80% of Scottish teachers, is committed to an anti-racist, anti-sexist education system which, in pursuing excellence for each learner, will also advance social equality. The conference reported in this document was designed to further this commitment. Papers presented in this collection include: (1) "Research and Practice in Pursuit of Social Justice in Education" by Sheila Riddell and Sally Brown; (2) "Social Class in Scottish Education" by Lindsay Paterson; (3) "Social Class and Educational Disadvantage: Are the Schools to Blame?" by David Hughes; (4) "Racism and Education: Issues for Research and Practice" by David Gillborn; (5) "Turning a Multi-Cultural and Anti-Racist Education Policy into Practice" by Helene Witcher; (6) "Gender and Education: Progressive and Conservative Forces in the Balance" by Sheila Riddell; (7) "Gender Issues: Policy into Practice," by Sheena Erskine; (8) "The Inter-Connections of Gender, Class, and Ethnicity within Educational Contexts" by Rowena Arshad; (9) "Bringing about Change in the Culture of a School" by Margaret Macintosh; and (10) "Equality in Education -- Old Dilemmas and New Possibilities" by Sally Brown and Sheila Riddell. The book also contains a preface and a list of nine suggested further readings. (LBG)

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Practitioner MiniPaper

Class, Race and Gender in Schools

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A New Agenda for Policy and Practice in Scottish Education

Sally Brown & Sheila Riddell (editors)

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Class, Race and Gender in Schools

A New Agenda for Policy and Practice in Scottish Education

Editors
Sally Brown and Sheila Riddell

Papers from a Round Table Conference Organised by the Educational Institute of Scotland

The Scottish Council for Research in Education

SCRE Publication 113

Practitioner MiniPaper 12

First Published 1992

Series Editors: Wynne Harlen
Rosemary Wake

SCRE is grateful to the Educational Institute of Scotland for financial assistance in the preparation of this book.

ISBN 0 947833 68 4

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Printed and bound in Great Britain for the Scottish Council for Research in Education by GNP Booth , Glasgow.

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PREFACE: REALISING RHETORIC

George MacBride
Convener, EIS Education Committee

The Educational Institute of Scotland, the trade union which represents approximately 80% of Scottish teachers from nursery to further and higher education, is committed to the maintenance and development of a comprehensive education system which empowers all learners. Such an education system, in pursuing excellence for each learner, will be anti-racist and anti-sexist and will further social equality. It is the view of the EIS that such an education system requires a teaching profession which is reflective and critically aware, using theory and practice to illuminate and inform each other. The EIS is determined that its commitment should not be merely a matter of rhetoric but that it should be realised. We have adopted several means of doing so. This conference on class, ethnicity and gender in education will, we hope, prove to have been an effective contribution to this process.

ACHIEVING AN EDUCATION SYSTEM COMMITTED TO EQUALITY & QUALITY

The EIS recognises that the achievement of an education system fully committed to both equality and to quality will not be easy, in more than one sense of the word 'easy'. It is not easy to conceptualise such a system when all education systems perpetuate, although to different extents, inequalities of the wider society in which they exist. It is not easy in that the practical steps needed will be difficult to achieve, requiring vision and labour. It is not easy for the EIS as an organisation and for its members in that we will have to question our own responsibilities for maintaining a system which often does not further equality and justice. However, the difficulties inherent in the process are no reason for abandoning it but rather a reason for approaching the process with more determined care and knowledge. We hope that the conference has contributed to this. A number of issues for the EIS and its members do in fact readily arise from the conference. There are tensions inherent in these issues; we trust that the tensions will be creative. A limited and limiting example may point up some of these tensions.

There is considerable evidence of the extent to which achievement in school as measured through certificate exam results is in Scotland associated with the socio-economic status of candidates (or at least that of their families). There is equally full evidence of the extent to which curricular pathways, though not necessarily levels of achievement, are gender-related. The EIS has tried to counter this latter inequality through training of members, through publicity, through attempting negotiations with education authorities and has achieved a measure of success. However, our attempts to counter the former inequality have been less notable. Why such a difference?

There are a number of points to consider. The first is that it is relatively easy to take steps to encourage girls to enter non-traditionally chosen subjects and, while success in altering traditional patterns of option choices has been rather limited, good practice does exist in this field. Further, while it may not be so easy to alter relevant aspects of practice in the classroom to prevent boys dominating interaction and gaining a disproportionate share of resources, there is again considerable evidence of the classroom practices which will promote gender equality. There is also evidence, perhaps more limited, of the teaching and assessment processes which will further gender equality in the classroom. Although much work remains to be done in terms of achieving gender equality in schools, progress has undoubtedly been made. By comparison, measures necessary to achieve class equality have scarcely been explored. I suspect that major challenges to our existing order would be necessary, including challenges to many of the present fundamental rules of the school.

In considering the steps which schools can take to challenge class inequality, there are a number of questions we must address. For instance, we in the EIS have to ask whether our fully justified opposition to crude league tables as promulgated by Michael Forsyth as Minister for Education does not lead us to accept too uncritically the proposition that achievement will in general terms be largely determined by the socio-economic status of the community which a school serves.

In addition, there is the political context. We can point to the real though limited successes of our comprehensive schools in promoting equality of achievement. When these schools and their teachers (our members) are under repeated attack then it is understandable that our defence becomes less critical than it might be in an informed and supportive environment.

In considering the contrasts between inequality of achievement in gender and SES terms, two further points must be made, which take us beyond my temporary acceptance of the agenda set by the use of exam results to measure school achievement. The first is quite simply that a school might well achieve such formal equality and still be a profoundly unjust and unequal place for many of its participants. It is not enough to make use of the measures we have inherited from an unequal school system to assess our progress towards equality. We must also consider the experiences of those who are disadvantaged by our system. We have to find the means by which the disadvantaged can become heard. This may again not be an easy process for teachers to take part in, since it may lead (possibly quickly) to a questioning of some of the fundamentals of our practice which we take for granted.

It is also evident that in this example I have ignored inequalities associated with race. We have to recognise that in Scotland these inequalities have in general received less attention than inequalities of class and gender. Here we will have to recognise the specific difficulties that arise when a comparatively small number of people are affected by a particular inequality. This fact does not make injustice any more acceptable while it may make it more difficult to have the matter addressed. In relation to this it will also be necessary to

open up questions of the extent and the ways in which our society contributes to injustice on a global scale and not only within our own country.

MOVING FORWARD

How then does this conference and the papers arising from it take us forward to tackle inequality? Firstly, and not trivially, it raises awareness of the issues. If we are not even aware that there are issues we can scarcely tackle them. Secondly, it provides information which can help inform future action. Thirdly, it provides examples of good practice from which we can all learn. Fourthly, it reveals areas in which further knowledge must be sought. Fifthly, it provides a model of relating research to practice. And finally, it points us towards issues that still require to be addressed. These outcomes are, of course, intertwined and interrelated. The provision of examples and information can lead us to consider action we can immediately take to alter our practice; can lead us to look for further information directly related to our own context; can raise issues for us which are beyond those already articulated; can lead us to consider who has been included in the process and whose aims are served by it.

It is evident from this collection of papers that issues of gender, class and ethnicity are being seriously addressed within our education system. Although hard questions are raised for us all they are not being ignored for the sake of ease even at a time when many of those with greater power in the education system are pursuing policies and practices which lead to greater inequality. The EIS and its members will continue to look critically at our practice.

The EIS must thank most sincerely all those who contributed to the success of this conference and its outcome. All of the contributors have provided us with models of good practice, in research and in teaching and in the relating of practice and research. SCRE and in particular Rosemary Wake have undertaken the publication of this collection with the result that its outcomes are put before a wider audience. Professor Sally Brown, who acts as research consultant to the EIS, and Sheila Riddell, both of Stirling University, organised the conference on our behalf and we are especially grateful to them for doing so with supreme efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, it is appropriate in such a collection as this to remember the contribution made to the success of this conference by all those who were not participants but whose labour and experience made it possible.

1
RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

Sheila Riddell and Sally Brown
University of Stirling

INTRODUCTION

Throughout education, there is growing awareness of questions about social justice. Realisation is dawning that even in those areas of the country with only small numbers of people from minority ethnic groups, racism is a concern; that despite 52% of the population being women, gender equality is far from achieved; and that few inroads seem to have been made into the continuing relationship between low socio-economic status and low achievement in school.

The Educational Institute of Scotland has been active in this area in both the formulation of policy and support for the practitioners who make up its membership. One strand of this activity was to invite us to organise an 'event' where researchers and practitioners could interact on the subjects of class, race and gender in education. This took the form of a round-table conference in November 1991 at which summaries of relevant research were juxtaposed with papers from practitioners offering their personal perspectives on the issues.

The contributions to this collection arose from papers at that conference. A decision was made to invite separate papers on class, race and gender and chapters 2 to 7 are organised in this way. That decision reflected a view that these distinctive analyses could shed light on the particular experiences of those who grow up working-class, or black, or female in the school system. Although there are powerful arguments which suggest this threefold categorisation is a false one when considering issues of social justice in education, it was our view that to abandon the categories would be to risk glossing over experiences which may be characteristic of one group but not common among the three.

As it turned out, all the papers strayed to some extent across the three categories and the conference discussion did so even more. This reflected, no doubt, the growing view that analyses of inequalities in education have to move on from the unhealthy 'hierarchy of oppressions' which feature in much of the thinking of the eighties, and aspire to build a unified strategy in pursuit of social justice during the last few years of this century. In line with this perspective, chapters 8 and 9 consider possibilities for such a strategy. But they also bring home the point that as well as class, race and gender, there have to be struggles for equality with regard to sexuality and disability. Further consideration of these issues, however, will have to wait for another book.

CLASS, RACE & GENDER – THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The desire to extend equal educational opportunity to all children, irrespective of their social characteristics, has long been a concern of educationalists and parents. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham (1981) argued that the 1944 Education Act, providing universal secondary education, represented a key part of the post-war settlement. The purpose of the legislation, they suggested, was to win the consent of working-class people to the existing political system by assuring them that their children would, in the future, enjoy equal access to education, which would in turn lead to a process of equalisation throughout society.[1] Control over selection, however, as well as the curriculum and assessment, remained firmly in the hands of the professionals and the post-war period saw a growing disenchantment concerning the ability of the education system to deliver what had been promised. This uneasiness was reflected in research lying within the 'political arithmetic' tradition,[2] which showed repeatedly that working-class children were failing to achieve levels of academic attainment comparable to those of middle-class children. Such researchers provided much of the stimulus and justification for the ideas and policies which led to the introduction of comprehensive schools, believed to be fundamentally fairer. More recently, attacks have been mounted on comprehensive schools by those on both the political Left and Right. From a left wing perspective, Reynolds and Sullivan,[3] for instance, maintained that comprehensive schools have failed lower ability pupils because of their emphasis on academic rather than social goals:

> The fragmentation and lack of cohesion amongst the staff and the associated inconsistent use of sanctions and punishments alienated the same pupils. Bureaucratised pastoral care often seemed more concerned with control than with care. Little parental pressure to conform was in evidence, since the comprehensive schools did not attempt to incorporate the parents of their lower ability pupils.

Others,[4] have defended the achievements of comprehensive education in Scotland, arguing that particularly in its earlier stages, it was responsible for a narrowing of the attainment gap between working-class and middle-class children.

Concern about social class inequality, then, has been a major theme of educational research in Britain over past decades. By way of contrast, interest in gender and ethnicity is far more recent. The major post-war education reports did not see these issues as worthy of attention and, in Scotland, some of the most incisive work on post-war educational policy contains not a single reference to either ethnicity or gender (McPherson and Raab; Gray, McPherson and Raffe).[5] With the rise of the women's movement and black activism in the 1970s, an increasing amount of attention was paid to the significance of gender and ethnicity in the educational experiences of young people and again comprehensive schools were found wanting. Mahony and Lees argued that schools were frightening places for many girls because of

[1] *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1981*

[2] *Floud, Halsey & Martin, 1956*

[3] *Reynolds & Sullivan, 1987*

[4] *Eg, McPherson & Willms, 1987*

[5] *McPherson & Raab, 1988, Gray, McPherson & Raffe 1983*

male violence[6] and Mac an Ghaill and Wright highlighted the existence of racial harassment.[7] Teachers were the object of much criticism for their willingness to stereotype pupils and their general reluctance to embrace positive action with much enthusiasm. The message from these researchers was that the meritocratic model intrinsic to comprehensive education was not working, partly because pupils were not in a position to compete with each other on equal terms and partly because schools were themselves implicated in reproducing existing social relations. It is interesting to note that both gender and ethnicity in education continue to be relatively neglected issues north of the Border.

[6] *Mahony, 1985; Lees, 1986*

[7] *Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Wright, 1987*

Whilst people on the Left were attacking comprehensive schools because they were not radical enough, an even more sweeping attack was being mounted by the Right. Introducing the Education Reform Bill to an education conference in 1987, Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State for Education, announced, 'The days of egalitarianism are now over'. The argument of the Conservative government was that comprehensive schools were failing because they had pursued egalitarian goals at the expense of efficiency and effectiveness. The over-riding concern of Baker and successive Secretaries of State for Education was to introduce the discipline of the market place into the education system. Although the legislation for England and Scotland has not been identical, the general drift of policy has nonetheless been similar. Some policies of the Conservative government emphasised the importance of choice and diversity. These included measures to allow parents greater freedom to select an appropriate education for their child through the establishment of specialist schools such as city technology colleges, the extension of the assisted places scheme and the right to choice of school. Further, schools were given the right to opt out of local authority control, to have increased financial autonomy and parents were given greater control over the running of a school through governing bodies and school boards. Other measures focused on greater central control (and so less choice) through the National Curriculum and assessment in England and Wales, and the 5–14 programme in Scotland. In the light of such a far-reaching programme of educational change, many of those committed to working for social justice through education are asking whether they have any chance of making an impact on the new order. At the very least, it is recognised that a radical overhauling of goals and strategies is required.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES IN EDUCATION

It is interesting to note the way in which the language of choice and quality assurance, initially coined by the Right, has become the common currency of all political parties. Labour-controlled education authorities in Scotland, such as Strathclyde and Central Regions, argue that they have not simply adopted the Conservatives' agenda. Rather, they claim that a new recognition of the rights of the consumer is perfectly compatible with their traditional concern to provide a fair and equal education for all. Is that a persuasive argument?

A number of commentators have suggested that there are indeed fundamental problems in reconciling a concern for individual choice with the welfare of groups. Adler, Petch and Tweedie,[8] in their study of parental choice of schools, suggest that the balance has swung too far in the direction of individual freedom, allowing parents to pursue the interests of their particular child to the detriment of the majority of pupils. Brown[9] has gone further and claims that parentocracy has replaced meritocracy as the guiding principle of education, so that the wealth and power of parents become the legitimate arbiters of a child's educational and life chances in place of the ability of the child. Arnot,[10] however, paints a slightly more optimistic picture. She acknowledges that the changed educational agenda demands a recognition of tensions within egalitarian movements and sets out a number of questions to be addressed which include: 'Are liberty and equality compatible? How much freedom and diversity can the Left cope with in terms of parental choice or pupil choice before the good of social equality is challenged?' Ultimately, however, she believes that concern with public accountability and choice does not represent the death knell of social justice concerns, but rather necessitates the exploration of new and more democratic ways of working.

[8] Adler, Petch & Tweedie, 1984

[9] Brown, 1990

[10] Arnot, 1991

In Scotland, there continues to be great potential for progress, since there is evidence to suggest that Scottish parents continue to place high value on collective social welfare, generally acting in a supportive way of schools and teachers rather than rushing to embrace the role of critical consumer.[11] In the coming decade, Scottish educationalists will need to ensure that policy developments in the areas of curriculum, assessment and evaluation place equality issues at the centre rather than the periphery. The onus for promoting change rests not only with individual teachers in their classrooms but also with education authorities, the SOED and its agents. Indeed, this is a point worth underlining, to avoid the danger that the centre may shrug off such responsibilities, failing to produce clearly spelt out policies on equality issues which are essential if classroom teachers are to act effectively. Scottish education authorities have taken action in this area relatively late compared with those in England and Wales but some are now making clear efforts to put stated commitments into practice. Central government, however, remains at best non-committal and has yet to recognise the strong case for research in Scotland on class, ethnicity and gender which takes account of its unique cultural, social, political and economic context.

[11] Munn, 1992

Let us now look briefly at the issues raised by the contributors to this collection.

THE PAPERS & THE CONTRIBUTORS

Lindsay Paterson, writing about social class from a research perspective, notes the essentially contentious nature of this area, both politically and with regard to terminology. The working definition of 'socio-economic status' he provides is therefore helpful. Paterson provides an overview of patterns of achievement with regard to socio-economic status, pointing to a period of

equalisation with the introduction of comprehensivisation which has tailed off in the 1980s but may resume in the 1990s. He argues that both quantitative and qualitative research methods are necessary to chart future developments.

From the perspective of a classroom teacher, **David Hughes** identifies some of the processes which he believes contribute to the persistent gap between the educational outcomes of middle-class and working-class pupils. He acknowledges the tendency of teachers to have lower expectations of working-class pupils, but rejects the view that teachers are entirely to blame for educational inequality. Most teachers, he suggests, have a commitment to achieving the best for all their pupils and recent educational developments have the potential to operate in the interests of such pupils. Pressures on teachers to cope with the increasing pace of educational change, however, may cause them to relegate equality issues to the back burner.

Like Lindsay Paterson, **David Gillborn** begins by focusing on what may be learned from the study of patterns of achievement. Drawing mainly on data from south of the Border, he points out that simple deficit models are inadequate to explain the educational achievements of minority ethnic groups. He also highlights the failure of some studies to control for key variables such as social class, thus producing misleading results. Gillborn presents data from a number of ethnographic studies which reveal teachers' stereotyped perceptions of the characteristics of minority ethnic pupils and identifies priorities for future research.

Helene Witcher, an ethnic minorities advisory teacher in Central Region, describes the Region's strategy for the introduction of multi-cultural and anti-racist guidelines, providing a clear example of how the two approaches have been combined in practice. She identifies a number of conditions which are necessary for the success of the guidelines, including their incorporation into all aspects of regional policy, the acceptance by teachers of the saliency of the issue in a predominantly white area and the involvement of minority ethnic communities in the monitoring of the implementation process.

In relation to the education of girls, **Sheila Riddell** emphasises that whereas quantitative data provide a picture of girls out-performing boys in school, qualitative data provide a less reassuring picture so that both types have to be considered in conjunction. She discusses the changing culture of femininity in school which reflects women's increasingly important economic role. The impact of gender equality policies on school practice are considered, as are the implications of recent legislation.

Sheena Erskine, an educational administrator in Tayside Region, argues strongly for the adoption of equal opportunities policies with regard to gender which are based on the principle of positive action. A critical

examination of power structures in schools as well as careful monitoring of classroom practice is required and teacher commitment is perhaps the key factor in bringing about change. As well as this, however, there is a responsibility on education authorities to incorporate a concern for equal opportunities into their policies at all levels.

Rowena Arshad is involved in in-service development work on ethnicity and education. Her contribution is distinctively different from the earlier ones in that she addresses explicitly the inter-connections between class, ethnicity and gender, arguing that the struggle for social justice in all areas is not just about changing attitudes, but also about redistributing power. A unified approach is required but may not be easily achieved, since conflict between different value systems will inevitably arise. A fruitful way to work out solutions to such dilemmas may be to encourage pupils to understand the multi-faceted nature of their identities and relationships.

Margaret Macintosh's paper addresses the vital matter of how change is to be brought about in the culture of a school. Based on her experience as head of a community high school, she also considers that issues of gender, ethnicity and class should be addressed in conjunction with each other, although of these class may well be the most difficult area in which to effect change. She outlines the various steps which must be taken to change the culture of a school, and describes the role of the head in facilitating rather than dictating action. The message is optimistic, for although change at times may appear slow and painful, it is certainly not impossible. Further, although policy statements are important in clarifying goals and strategies, they cannot substitute for committed action by individual teachers, who should receive proper acknowledgement of their efforts.

In the final chapter **Sally Brown** and **Sheila Riddell** draw together from all the contributors some of the analyses, ideas and suggestions for how Scottish education could go forward to a system of greater equality and social justice. This attempts to bring out the common themes from the issues of class, ethnicity and gender, but it also points to some of the differences among the three areas of concern.

The intention of this collection of papers is to invite communication and later, we hope, collaboration among researchers and practitioners in this country. By providing an opportunity for interactions between the two groups, and offering its support to this publication, the Educational Institute of Scotland has demonstrated further the seriousness of its concerns about social justice for *everyone* in education. We do not claim, of course, that this collection presents a comprehensive map of all the issues of class, ethnicity and gender that impinge on education and society more generally. It is better thought of

as a 'starter paper' for an educational community which has not been in the forefront of work of this kind, but is now showing signs of eagerness to build upon the work of others with intent to become a leader.

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2
SOCIAL CLASS IN SCOTTISH EDUCATION

Lindsay Paterson
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INTRODUCTION

Social class is a contentious topic in Scottish education. Michael Forsyth, Education Minister between 1987 and 1992, has argued repeatedly that invoking social class as an explanation of levels of examination performance is invidious to working-class pupils: statistical correlations between performance and social background are due entirely, he says, to differences in 'opportunity and expectations in the schools'.[1] Whether we agree with his political position or not, on this as on other matters he has posed a difficult challenge to a central theme of educational sociology. The challenge is exacerbated by the existence of evidence from that same sociological tradition that part at least of his argument is correct – that it is partly expectations by teachers and other adults that are responsible for working-class pupils' having lower attainment than they might.[2]

[1] *Parliamentary Debates, 1989*

[2] *Mortimore & Blackstone, 1982*

Social class is contentious in Scotland also for deeper cultural and historical reasons. The myth of the lad o' pairts asserts the irrelevance of class to personal educational achievement. To confront the myth with evidence that this is manifestly not so is therefore to challenge a central belief of the society; and there is now a large volume of research which does this.[3] Myths are only tenuously about evidence, however, a point to which I return at the end.[4] Social class is contentious for a third reason too. It has a mythological significance for sections of the political Left. Even to question the role and nature of social class is controversial, as was shown by the heated exchanges which followed the version of the present paper that was given at the EIS seminar.[5] One participant put this objection neatly when he said that he would never have expected to hear the words "social class" placed in inverted commas in the EIS council chamber.

[3] *Eg, Anderson, 1983; Willms, 1986; Fewell & Paterson, 1990; Paterson, 1992a,b*

[4] *McPherson & Raab, 1988*

[5] *Times Educational Supplement (Scotland), 22.11.91*

This chapter does put the concept in inverted commas, because it examines (rather than postulates) the ways in which social class can be said to be relevant to children's educational experience. That does not mean that the chapter rejects the whole concept. It builds class up from its component social characteristics, asking what are the educationally relevant features of pupils' social circumstances, how these features have been measured by researchers, and what relationships have been found between these measures and educational progress and attainment. To these ends, the chapter cites research from many societies, because the common social structures of the economically developed world have produced common educational effects of social circumstances. The main illustrations are from Scotland.

The starting point of the discussion (Section 2) is a question about resources: what are the educational resources available to a young person in and through the family? There are two broad types of resource, material and cultural, which interact with each other. They have cumulative effects, and they operate not only directly through the immediate family but also through people beyond the family with whom a young person comes into contact, for example in the school or in the neighbourhood (Section 3).

It is through these collective features that social class can re-enter the discussion. But to avoid pre-empting that conclusion, the social circumstances are referred to throughout as socio-economic status (SES), a rather clumsy term from the North American literature, which does, however, have the advantage of reminding us that the phenomena we are dealing with cannot readily be reduced to a single dichotomy of 'working class' and 'middle class'. Section 4 looks briefly at the interactions between SES and gender or ethnicity, Section 5 at the prospects for change in the effects of SES in the 1990s, and Section 6 at the research that needs to be done to understand better how SES has its effects and how they could be overcome.

THE SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILIES

Material resources – what to measure

Ideally, an investigation of the material resources a pupil can draw on at home would collect information directly on such topics as food, accommodation, and money available for school trips. But, because this is expensive, most research has relied on surrogates, such as parental occupation and family structure.[6] Father's occupation is the most commonly used measure, but there is much evidence that this is not enough. The most important reason is that mother's occupation is relevant too. For each parent, questions arise as to how to summarise their type of job, the power they have in the workplace, and the extent to which they are engaged in the paid labour force.

[6] *Paterson 1992b reviews the literature*

There are many classifications of occupations: for the UK, examples are the scheme adopted by the Registrar General (RG),[7] the Hope-Goldthorpe scheme,[8] and Prandy's Cambridge scores.[9] An advantage of the RG scheme is that it is used widely, and accepted by government (important if part of the intention is to influence government). It also, however, has two disadvantages. The main one is that it inadequately classifies women's jobs (for example, because it places a misleadingly large proportion of women in the skilled nonmanual category).[10] Therefore various alternative schemes for women have been developed.[11] The second problem is that the RG scheme takes little account of power in the workplace, and does not distinguish between part-time and full-time working. The easiest way of coping with this problem is not to look for a single classification scheme that does contain such information, but to record information on these topics separately. This is particularly important for measuring women's economic activity, in order that full-time work in the home can be recognised as a distinct category. The material resources available to a pupil have been measured also by family

[7] *OPCS, 1980*

[8] *Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974*

[9] *Prandy, 1990*

[10] *Haug, 1973; Murgatroyd, 1982, 1984; Dale, Gilbert & Arber, 1985*

[11] *Eg. Murgatroyd, 1984*

structure – predominantly family size, and whether both natural parents are present.

Findings in relation to material resources

Those few studies which have collected direct measures of material resources have found them to be strongly associated with educational progress and attainment.[12] But the surrogates have consistently shown a similar pattern. There is overwhelming evidence from many societies that pupils whose parents are placed low on an occupational scale suffer educational disadvantage. For example, in Scotland, throughout the 1980s, the gap in attainment in fourth year between pupils whose fathers were in RG classes I and II (professional occupations) and pupils whose fathers were in classes IV and V (semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations) was on average about three awards at levels 1-3 of the Ordinary or Standard grade.[13]

[12] *Mortimore & Blackstone, 1982; Douglas, 1964*

[13] *Unpublished analysis of Scottish Young People's Survey*

Research in other societies suggests that the reason for this gap is poverty, or semi-poverty.[14] Inadequate housing, for example, leads to overcrowding and hence difficulties for a pupil wanting to work at home. Poor conditions for parents in their jobs can lead to stress or other ill-health, which can then induce similar ailments in their children.

[14] *Mortimore & Blackstone, 1982*

There is also evidence that living in a larger family is generally a disadvantage.[15] But there is no consensus that living in a one-parent family is a disadvantage in itself. Certainly pupils from one-parent families do, on average, have lower attainment;[16] where the doubt arises is whether that is because of the absence of a parent, or because the sole parent, who is usually female, is forced into a low-paid job and poor working conditions.

[15] *Mortimore & Blackstone, 1982*

[16] *Paterson, 1992a,b*

Cultural resources – what to measure

Opportunity to learn is now an important theme in educational-research literature as an explanation of differences in educational attainment.[17] Opportunities to learn at home are therefore likely to be the main reason why parents' cultural resources are relevant to a child's progress. Again, direct measures would be desirable, but are expensive to collect. A common substitute is parental education, the influence of which is explained in two ways. Parents can pass on what they have learned to their children. Alternatively the credentials which a parent has acquired can create social status for the family, and thereby indirectly influence the child's aspirations and the expectations which teachers would have of the child.[18]

[17] *Gamoran, 1991*

[18] *Collins, 1979; Paterson, 1992b*

Findings in relation to cultural resources

Direct measures of cultural resources have been shown to be associated with educational attainment and progress, and with the child's own interest in school. An example is the Edinburgh Lead Study, although measuring SES was not its main purpose.[19] Measures of parental education usually have a strong correlation with pupils' attainment. There is evidence from the USA to

[19] *Fulton et al, 1987; Thomson et al, 1989*

confirm that parents can use their own education to help the child: general cognitive growth depends on specifically verbal interaction when a child is older than one year, and so the parents' linguistic skills are an important resource.[20] Such skills are more widespread than specialised skills such as mathematics. Raudenbush found more variation among schools in mathematics attainment than in native-language attainment, and found also that the mathematics variation could be explained by the amount of education which the mother had obtained;[21] this suggests that there is normally more help in the home for a common skill – such as speaking a native language – than in skills which are held by only a relatively highly educated minority.

Studies of several societies have found that the more educated the parents are, the more likely they are to visit the school, and to take part in activities such as those of a parent-teacher association. The analysis of the pilot school boards in Scotland confirmed this.[22] Cultural resources are also found to be associated with educational choices made by parents or pupils. In Scotland, parents with more education are more likely than those with minimal education to choose to send their child to a non-local school.[23] Among pupils with given levels of attainment in fourth year, staying-on rates beyond the minimum leaving age are higher among those who have well-educated parents than among others. Likewise, among pupils with similar numbers of Higher Grade passes from fifth or sixth year, application rates to higher education (and especially to university) are higher for those whose parents stayed on at school to age 17 than among those who left earlier.[24]

[20] Mortimore & Blackstone, 1982

[21] Raudenbush, 1988

[22] Munn & Brown, 1989

[23] Echols, McPherson & Willms, 1990

[24] Paterson, 1992c

The relationship between material and cultural resources

One reason why a simple model of social class is untenable in this context is that material and cultural resources cut across each other. It is not enough to say that working-class people are culturally deprived, as Bernstein's earlier writing came close to saying.[25] No doubt low-income parents do have less money to spend on books and other cultural resources even if they would like to. Nevertheless, the evidence is that parental cultural resources can help to compensate for a lack of material resources.[26]

[25] Bernstein, 1962

[26] Paterson, 1992b

SES influences on children's progress

Social circumstances influence children's progress as well as the level they have reached at any stage. For example, in a detailed investigation of Fife pupils' progress between primary 7 and fourth year in secondary school in the mid-1980s, it was found that all the dimensions of SES mentioned above had independent influences.[27] Most influential was parental education. All other things being equal, there was a difference in attainment of about one 'O' grade between two children, one in the upper quarter of the social distribution of parental education and the other in the lower quarter. Independent of this was an effect of father's occupation – a gap of three-quarters of an 'O' grade. Further independent influences came from mother's occupation and from family size (each a gap of one-quarter of an 'O' grade). Because all these four

[27] Paterson, 1992b

effects are independent of each other, they provide strong evidence that a class schema that described only father's occupation would be inadequate for summarising the effect of social circumstances on children's progress.

The effects on progress continue after age 16. For example, staying on at school, and qualifying for higher education, are more likely among pupils with well-educated parents than among other pupils. This remains true even for pupils who have already reached similar levels of attainment in fourth year.[28]

[28] *Paterson, 1992a*

SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THE FAMILY

Resources on which a child can draw at home are not the only social influence on education, however. Collective social circumstances matter too.

The most commonly found influence of this type is from fellow pupils. A pupil of given family social circumstances can benefit from mixing with other pupils who are from socially advantaged families: this has been found for Scotland,[29] for England,[30] for the USA,[31] and for France.[32] At least two mechanisms may be responsible. The direct explanation is that pupils can share in each others' family resources. The indirect is, once again, that teachers' educational expectations of groups of pupils might be influenced by the average social circumstances of the group. In Scotland, an important way in which this social context operates is through the history of the school as either a senior or a junior secondary before the introduction of comprehensive education.[33] The former senior secondaries have higher attainment partly because of their favourable social mix.[34] A second interesting feature of the effect of social context in Scotland concerns the Catholic schools. They are notably successful in overcoming what is in most of them an unfavourable social mix. Another way of putting this is that the social mix is less strongly associated with attainment in the Catholic schools than elsewhere.[35] There has been no research in Scotland as to why this should be so, but the schools themselves would claim that it was because of their orderly climate and attention to academic work.[36] Evidence to bear out the relevance of these features can be found from the USA, where attainment that is both high and socially equal has been found to be associated with an academically focused climate and a policy of paying attention to the quality of the interactions between adults and pupils.[37]

[29] *Willms, 1986; Paterson, 1992b*

[30] *Nuttall et al, 1989*

[31] *Erbring & Young, 1979; Marsh, 1991*

[32] *Duru-Bellat & Mingat, 1990*

[33] *McPherson & Willms, 1986; Paterson, 1991*

[34] *Paterson, 1991:Table 6*

[35] *Willms, 1990; Paterson, 1991*

[36] *Catholic Education Commission, Scotland, 1992*

[37] *Lee & Bryk, 1989*

The social context of a pupil's neighbourhood is a second way in which collective circumstances have an effect, over and above the effect of individual circumstances and of the school social context.[38] To explain this, there are again the two hypotheses: either the pupils draw on resources in their neighbourhoods outwith their own homes, or teachers' expectations are influenced by the character of pupils' neighbourhoods as well as homes.

[38] *Garner & Raudenbush, 1991*

The relevance of these social circumstances beyond the family does start to get us closer to a more conventionally defined notion of 'social class', because it shows that we have to pay attention to social groups if we are to understand individual behaviour. In a sense, moreover, we were doing the same even when we were looking at parental occupation or education, for

example. The effect of being in a particular occupation stems not only from the material resources which it provides, but also from the status characteristics of all the people who are in that occupation, either locally or nationally. For example, the social status of certain jobs is affected by whether they are dominated by women or by men.[39] A similar point could be made about the measures of parental education, and is indeed entailed by Collins's suggestion, cited earlier, that possessing credentials is a status resource in itself.

[39] *Abbott & Sapsford, 1987. Marshall et al, 1988*

Nevertheless, even though collective matters are important, they too are more complicated than a simple account of 'social class' would imply. They cut across each other, and across other social levels: thus a pupil with well-educated parents at a school with generally poorly educated parents still has higher attainment (all other things being equal) than a pupil with poorly educated parents in a school with generally highly educated parents.[40] Moreover, part of the social meaning of living in a particular community is not living in other communities;[41] therefore what is likely to matter educationally are the comparisons people make with other communities locally, so that a community of given social characteristics would have a high or low status depending on the nature of these immediate neighbours. A simple categorisation as 'working-class' or 'middle-class' community would not be enough.

[40] *Willms, 1986; Paterson, 1992b*

[41] *McPherson & Willms, 1986*

SES & OTHER SOURCES OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

SES in relation to gender

Nearly all the patterns described in the preceding sections are the same for boys and girls.[42] Another way of putting this is that gender differences are the same in all social groups. This situation requires explaining as much as the opposite would. When so many features of Scottish society are structured by gender, and when the social position of pupils' parents depends on which parent we look at, why is a pupil's own gender not relevant to the way in which the SES of their parents, or their peers, or their neighbourhood influences their educational experience? The research has yet to be done.

[42] *Willms & Kerr, 1988; Paterson, 1992a,b*

SES in relation to ethnicity

It was confirmed by other participants in the EIS conference that no work had been published in Scotland on the interactions between ethnicity and SES. Thus we do not know, for example, the extent to which the low average attainment of people from ethnic minorities is due to their ethnicity directly, or alternatively to the occupational patterns of the ethnic group to which they belong.[43]

[43] *Smith, 1991*

PROSPECTS OF CHANGE

The findings discussed earlier do not suggest that SES differences have been changing in the last decade. There was change towards greater equality during the development of comprehensive schooling in Scotland, as McPherson and Willms[44] explain in detail. They showed that average SCE attainment rose during that period in all social groups (defined by father's occupation), but

[44] *McPherson & Willms, 1987*

rose most rapidly in the group whose fathers were in manual occupations. Therefore the lack of change in the 1980s suggests that the equalising effect of comprehensive schooling was due to the change that it embodied rather than the processes of the comprehensive system itself. The most important relevant feature of the change was probably the abolition of the previous social segregation between senior and junior secondaries. Pupils from socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods would thereafter have had more opportunities than their predecessors to enter classes leading to SCE examinations.

However, the lack of continuing equalisation in the 1980s does not mean that we should be pessimistic about the 1990s. Some of the effects of the introduction of comprehensive schooling will not begin to be seen until the early 1990s, because they operate between, not within, generations.

The first reason for some optimism is that, partly because of the introduction of comprehensive schools, but probably mainly because of the raising of the school leaving age to 16 in 1973, the average educational level of today's parents is higher than that of parents a decade or two ago. For example, whereas only 25.8% of school leavers in 1978 had at least one parent who had stayed on beyond the minimum leaving age, by 1990 this had nearly doubled, to 45.8%.[45] Thus a smaller proportion of pupils now than a decade ago suffers from the disadvantage of having poorly educated parents; in social-democratic terms, this is a social improvement, even if the relative disadvantage of having poorly educated parents has not changed. Similar effects of comprehensive education have been observed in other societies.[46] The trend is bound to continue, because attainment has been rising steadily.

[45] *Unpublished analysis of Scottish Young People's Survey*

[46] *Leschinsky & Mayer, 1990*

Compounding this rise in parental-education levels is a change in relative fertility of people with different amounts of education. The average family size of pupils whose parents left school at age 15 or younger fell slightly more steeply between 1980 and 1990 (from 3.9 to 2.9) than the average family size of other pupils (from 3.4 to 2.7).[47] Thus the second reason for there being a smaller proportion of pupils with poorly educated parents now than a decade ago is that there were fewer born.

[47] *Unpublished analysis of Scottish Young People's Survey*

The third reason is closely related to these first two. Some of the parents who benefited from the educational expansion of the 1960s and 1970s (in higher education as well as in the schools) will have used that education to move into better jobs than their own parents had had, and, as we have seen, the status of these jobs will have had a direct effect on their children's education. Thus, comparing across three generations (from todays' school leavers to their grandparents) we would almost certainly find even more educational improvement and equalisation than a comparison of two generations shows. Unfortunately, however, no recent Scottish data sources have collected information on three generations of occupation and education.

A final reason for optimism is the reactions in Scotland to recent educational policy. This assertion may seem perverse, because many commentators have expected that recent UK policies would lead to a deterioration of educational opportunities for working-class pupils.[48] Yet this has not happened: although there was not a reduction in social inequalities,

[48] *Eg. Brown, 1990*

[49] Paterson, 1992a

there was not a widening either.[49] The reason may be that, despite government policy, Scotland has maintained the broad social-democratic consensus that underlay the comprehensive reforms in the first place; most people in the system therefore remain committed to the ideals which inspired these reforms.[50]

[50] McPherson, 1990; Munn, 1992

At the same time, moreover, there are pressures which are likely to reduce some social inequalities. The most immediate of these will affect staying-on rates beyond age 16, which are rising rapidly, and are expected to continue to rise for the foreseeable future.[51] Staying-on rates are already so high in advantaged social groups that any improvement for the pupil population as a whole is almost bound to come disproportionately from disadvantaged groups. For example, 73% of pupils with fathers in the Registrar General's classes I or II stayed on in 1990 (up from 65% in 1980), leaving little further room for improvement. The main scope for improvements is in other groups, such as those whose fathers are in classes IV and V, where the rate is already rising more rapidly (from 17% in 1980 to 34% in 1990).[52]

[51] SOED, 1991

[52] Paterson, 1992a

FURTHER RESEARCH

Regardless of the direction which policy takes, and despite the fairly large amount of research that has already been done into SES and education in Scotland, there is still a need for further investigations. We do not know a great deal about the mechanisms by which social circumstances have their effects, largely because most of the research describes large-scale patterns, rather than the intervening social and psychological processes. We need to know, for example, how pupils benefit from the educational resources of their parents: is it through parental expectations, or through the educational materials (books etc) which the parents buy, or through the status which parental credentials convey, or (as is most likely) a mixture of all of these and others? We need to know, too, how peer groups have their effects.

Of more direct relevance to educational practice would be knowledge of how teachers and schools can help to overcome a lack of material and cultural resources in pupils' homes or neighbourhoods. Possible ways might be by the direct provision of extra facilities such as rooms for homework, or by helping the parents to help the children. We also have to understand better not just whether but also to what extent such local action can have an effect. We saw in section 5 that there were very broad social developments changing the social distribution of attainment; we do not know what freedom for local manoeuvre there is within these glacial movements.

Perhaps most fundamentally of all, we need a resolution of the challenge which has been thrown at educational research in this area by Mr Forsyth. We simply do not fully understand the role of teacher expectations in causing social differences. It is logically possible that Mr Forsyth is right – that all social differences are due to the different expectations which schools and teachers have of pupils from different types of social background.

All this further research, finally, has to be done on Scotland. If the purpose is to understand people's attitudes to and experience of social differences,

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then we cannot substitute for Scottish experiences the experiences of structurally similar social groups elsewhere. We can indeed legitimately borrow from other similar societies for research which points to the statistical relationship between structural characteristics and young people's attainment, because Scotland shares with many other societies a mass education system serving an economy that can be described as that of developed capitalism. But when we come to investigate the meaning which people attribute to social structures in Scotland, there is no adequate substitute for a direct study of the Scottish case itself. Only if we do so can we understand, for example, why a social structure that is by no means unique can co-exist with the myth of uniquely democratic openness that I mentioned at the beginning; indeed, we do not even know how widely that myth is held.[53] And only if we develop this better understanding of how and why myths are believed can we use them to help realise the aspirations towards openness that they embody. It is by reaching that kind of understanding of meanings that research can speak directly to people, and thereby have some prospect of informing their actions.

[53] *McPherson & Raab, 1988; Fewell & Paterson, 1990*

Acknowledgements

The work for this chapter was supported by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) through its funding of the Centre for Educational Sociology as a Designated Research Centre (ESRC grant number C00280004). The Scottish Young People's Survey was supported by the Scottish Office Education Department, the Scottish Office Industry Department, the ESRC, the Training Agency, and the Department of Employment.

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3

SOCIAL CLASS AND EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE: ARE THE SCHOOLS TO BLAME?

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INTRODUCTION

'Scotland is a classless society, it's just that some are more classless than others.' This old adage sums up for me the contradiction between the myth and the reality. People like to believe that Scotland is an egalitarian society, but in fact it is class-ridden and the education system is no exception. A person's accent, dress, occupation, background, school and address are all used by others to make judgements. This was brought home to me when I was sent to a school in my home town on teaching practice. On arrival, I was met in the corridor by the assistant headteacher. Knowing I was a local, he assumed that I had attended the school because I had a degree; his school was the High School and as far as he knew no other schools in the area ever sent pupils to university. He was embarrassed, he said, because he could not remember me. I had to point out that there was no reason why he should since I had gone to one of the other secondary schools. Returning to the original statement, it seems to me that there is strong resistance to recognising that class is a factor in pupil's educational experience and this is one reason why investigation into its effects is long overdue. This investigation will be uncomfortable, but has to be undertaken if we want to do the best for all pupils in the comprehensive system.

My remit is to provide a classroom teacher's perspective on class in Scottish education. As a senior teacher with responsibility for equal opportunities and a member of Central Region's advisory committee in this area, I had spent some time thinking about the inter-connections of gender, ethnicity and class. In my view, class has tended in recent years to be neglected and therefore I welcomed this opportunity. The definition of class I am using is not as rigorous as that which would be used by a researcher. Broadly speaking, I would consider parents to be middle-class if they are employed in professional or white collar work and working-class if they are employed in manual work. I would also include unemployed people in the latter category. Working-class people are not only generally paid less than middle-class people, they also experience less financial security, have more health problems and worse housing conditions. Children of working-class parents still perform less well in school than their middle-class counterparts and this is why I believe teachers who are concerned about equality should be looking at ways in which these children can be helped to fulfil their educational potential.

GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

First, to fill in some details about the background to my teaching experience. Although I have now moved to a new post, for most of my teaching career I taught in a large comprehensive school in a sizeable town in Central Scotland. It had been, before comprehensivisation, the town's senior secondary school. After the Parents' Charter, it received a large number of placing requests, initially from parents who had been pupils when it was the senior secondary. It also received placing requests from another secondary school in the town with a declining school population and a collapsing roll. The school had a high level of success in national examinations and in pupils going on to higher education. As well as the fact that most pupils wore uniform, parents were attracted by the extra-curricular activities on offer, including success in debating competitions. The roll of the school has remained high over the last decade, standing at 1,250 at one time and never falling below 1,100. This is obviously the profile of what many people would regard as a highly successful school. But was it also successful in achieving equal outcomes for children of different social backgrounds?

Since comprehensivisation, the school has five associated primary schools. One served an area of social deprivation, two an area of mixed council and private houses, one (the most middle class) an area of private houses and one, the largest, an area of council and former SSHA houses built between 1973 and 1978. Each of these primaries had its own identity and, even at secondary school, pupils retained a loyalty to their original school and a sense of how they were different from those who attended the others. For instance, according to the pupils who attended the predominantly working class schools, the middle-class primary school pupils 'fancied themselves'. Although staff in all the primary schools did a good job in providing a sound education for all their pupils, a hierarchy of worth still existed in the eyes of the local community. There were placing requests from parents living in the area of the primary serving the purpose-built housing scheme to the middle-class primary school. This school used the same colour uniform as the secondary school and in the days before comprehensivisation it had very strong links with the senior secondary, sending most of its pupils there. It was certainly the case that judgements of academic worth based on historical precedent rather than present day circumstances were still alive.

In the early years of comprehensivisation, the secondary school had had a hard time adjusting and some teachers seemed to interact better with the pupils of the middle-class primary – the blazers were the same, they spoke the same language, their parents had similar values to their own. The poorest pupils stood out and some staff continued to regard them as non-academic. Today, it is probably still the case that some staff have higher expectations of pupils from the middle-class primary school. It is also the case that these pupils continue to dominate the credit/general Standard grade classes and achieve higher examination results. It is worth looking closely at aspects of school life which maintain the division between working class and middle class pupils.

ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE WHICH DISADVANTAGE WORKING CLASS PUPILS

As I stated at the start, in Scottish society judgements continue to be made on the basis of the language and accent which people use. This was highlighted recently when, in a letter to a national newspaper, the writer questioned the intellectual ability of the SNP MP Jim Sillars because he referred to the Prime Minister as 'feart'. The underlying assumption that a regional dialect implies diminished intellectual capacity seems to me to be highly significant. Teachers in the secondary school shared this assumption, insisting that standard English should be used not only in writing but also in speaking. I believe that since language is all about communication, if pupils are able to communicate effectively using their own dialect and accent then they should be encouraged to do so. Not all homes use received pronunciation and it is wrong to insist on it if this leaves some pupils feeling inferior. Pupils should be encouraged to express themselves and if this is in their own language then well and good. In written language, it is important that spelling and punctuation rules are observed, but here, too, it is important that pupils retain their own voice. It is when pupils feel unable to express themselves in school, or feel a wide gap between the values of the home and those of the school, that disenchantment and alienation are likely to set in.

Innovations in the curriculum have not benefitted all pupils equally. One of the justifications for Standard grade was that it would help socially disadvantaged pupils by providing a common examination system and preventing pupils being split into sheep and goats early in their secondary school career. It was also designed to place more emphasis on course-work and less on the final examination. Although this new emphasis on critical thought rather than the mindless regurgitation of facts is justified in educational terms, there is also the matter of resources. Investigation work requires visits to libraries, interviews with relevant agencies and parental support. Design projects benefit from better materials and assistance from parents. Pupils from supportive and well-resourced homes are provided with home computers, another useful tool. It is expected that much of the content of Standard grade courses will be studied by pupils at home while teachers concentrate in helping pupils develop the necessary skills in class. Pupils undoubtedly develop confidence by learning the techniques of discussion, debate and analysis, but the emphasis on homework in Standard grade can be discriminatory. Space and time as well as peace and quiet are required to carry it out. At Higher grade, too, fieldwork and formal extended essays require a great deal of work to be done at home. Better educated parents will be able to help their children because they know what is needed and feel able to ask the school if necessary. In addition, more and more courses involve field trips as supplements to course-work and, where there is a charge, working class pupils could be disadvantaged.

Clearly, a number of dilemmas are posed here. It would not make sense to abandon the course-work element of Standard grade because some pupils receive greater parental assistance than others. Nor would it be justified to

ban all school trips because some pupils find it difficult to participate. What is required is a recognition that simply announcing that an equal opportunities policy exists is not enough. The effort required to achieve exam success by a working class pupil may be far greater than that required by a middle-class pupil. In view of this, teachers should ensure that working class pupils receive every possible encouragement and where it is known that practical problems exist, such as lack of study space at home, the school should try to make this available during the lunch break and after school.

ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE WHICH DISADVANTAGE WORKING CLASS PARENTS

The present government has placed great emphasis on the involvement of parents in their children's education through such measures as the right to choice of school and the right to become involved in the management of schools through school boards. However, perhaps more thought should be given to whether all parents are equally able to become involved, and if not, what are the barriers which stand in their way.

Parents' evenings are traditionally one of the central ways in which schools communicate vital information to parents about their child's progress. However, they are not necessarily a comfortable experience for all. When people smarten up and arrive in cars – as they are surely entitled to do – they put at a disadvantage those who cannot dress up or who don't have a car. Some feel threatened and don't come to the meeting. Some shift workers or evening workers cannot manage evening meetings, and single parents, usually women, may have problems getting baby sitters. Pupils who are not living with their parents for whatever reason may have no one to visit the school and enquire about their progress, thus missing out yet again on personal contact and encouragement.

Each of the five associated primaries I mentioned earlier has a school board and a parent teacher association (PTA), yet the secondary school's school board and PTA consist almost exclusively of parents from the predominantly middle class primary school. Those who do come forward to help, deserve thanks for their time, energy and good work but there is a problem in that not all sections of the community are represented.

Clearly, as was the case with homework and school trips, dilemmas exist. It would be absurd to say that all parents' evenings should be cancelled because some parents find it difficult or intimidating to attend. However, if parental support and involvement is beneficial – and I think it is essential – then ways of involving all parents must be sought. Otherwise some pupils are disadvantaged. We must ask ourselves why some parents can respond to their child's primary school, yet feel ill at ease or threatened by the secondary. Part of the answer may be that parents who attended junior secondary schools before comprehensivisation felt failures within their secondary schools. For these parents, returning to school for parents' evenings may bring back painful memories. Schools must be aware of these feelings, treating parents with respect at all times and making the occasions as informal and

welcoming as possible. For parents who cannot attend at the specified time, there should be greater flexibility of access to teachers.

Just as language is important in communicating effectively with pupils, the use of educational jargon is alienating for many parents. Standard grade spawned its own language (key elements, learning outcomes, extended grade related criteria and so on). Scotvec introduced more jargon and now revised Highers have followed suit. The 5–14 programme brings with it another set of terminology, often using different language for exactly the same concepts. If teachers are feeling perplexed, you can be sure that parents are too. At a time when education is meant to be becoming more accessible to parents, many are being put off by the jargon used. Unless schools are able to explain what they are doing in terms which every one can understand, they are likely to confuse all but the most confident and articulate parents.

POSITIVE STEPS TAKEN BY SCHOOLS TO OVERCOME SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE

From what I have said so far, it might be concluded that schools and teachers are discriminating against working-class pupils and their parents, but this would only be a partial view. My experience is that most teachers do their level best to get the most out of and for all pupils. Let me give some examples. The secondary school I mentioned earlier has adopted a number of strategies to help overcome the effects of a disadvantaged background. It has developed straightforward and accessible policies in more easily understood language and these are communicated to parents through primary school liaison and at information evenings for parents of pupils in P7, S2 and S4. An equal opportunities policy looking at teaching and learning has been developed which staff accept and incorporate into their work. Homework policy lays down what is expected with a view to reducing the difference between home backgrounds. At my present school, I encourage pupils to use the facilities and resources of the Department at lunch, after school and at intervals between lessons to ensure greater equality of access to teaching materials. Effective bidding for TVEI funding has been used to purchase computing equipment which means that all pupils have access to word processing and desktop publishing facilities in school rather than relying on what individual parents can afford to make available at home.

As well as matters to do with resourcing, a better understanding of teaching and learning is essential to narrowing the achievement gap between working-class and middle-class children. Both my present and previous schools have developed differentiated approaches to learning, so that all pupils may study a particular topic in history, for instance, but carry out tasks appropriate to their present level of achievement. An imaginative approach to learning support is also vital to pupils who may be underachieving because of social disadvantage, so that learning problems may be dealt with at an early stage before they become insurmountable barriers. Standard grade courses, despite the dangers mentioned earlier, are designed to develop the pupil's ability to research, discuss, analyse and reach conclusions rather than

regurgitate facts. By providing a common examination for all, Standard grade has the potential to narrow class divisions. In terms of boosting the confidence of working class pupils, personal and social development courses which enable them to reflect and come to a better understanding of their own experiences are very valuable. Pupil councils, which teach pupils that their views are valued by the institution, are also important. And when social problems do arise, additional support from guidance staff may prevent pupils from turning their anger and confusion against the school.

Schools are also more aware of the way in which appearance may be used as the basis of social judgements and are introducing more accessible uniforms. Although sometimes seen as old fashioned and encouraging conformity, uniform can help avoid peer pressure over designer clothes. Blazers are expensive and if insisted on can highlight the distinction between the wealthier and less well off. Increasingly, schools are settling on a cheaper and less discriminatory uniform based on trousers or skirts and sweatshirts or jumpers with the school badge rather than blazers and ties.

Throughout schools in Scotland, more thought is being given to communicating effectively with parents. More detailed reports now let parents and pupils know more about their progress. Instead of a mark, an attitude grade and a one line comment, a full set of information is provided. This report contains information about what is being assessed and is written in plain language, informing parents of their child's strengths and weaknesses and where improvement is required. It also encourages parents and pupils to comment on progress towards past and future goals. Increasingly, subject departments draw up booklets on course content and assessment for parental information. If parents know what is going on then pupils can be helped. Direct parental involvement in schools is also being encouraged, not just as fund raisers on PTAs but also as helpers particularly in primary classes. Of course, as mentioned earlier, there is always the danger that action to improve communication with parents reaches middle-class parents more effectively than working class parents. This is not an argument for concluding that all action is doomed to failure, but for constantly reviewing what is happening.

CONSTRAINTS ON CHANGE IN SCHOOL

The preceding section outlines some of the developments in schools which are likely to have particular benefits for working-class pupils in widening the opportunities available to them. However, whilst all these measures are positive, the picture is not entirely rosy since they also have radical resource and workload implications. We have a comprehensive system of education and a staff who are by and large committed to it. Research suggests that it is leading to higher levels of success in national examinations and in Scotland the gap between the educational achievement of working-class and middle-class pupils has narrowed since the introduction of comprehensive schools. But we do not have a commitment to the adequate resourcing of comprehen-

sive education by our paymasters, the government. Pupil-centred learning in much smaller classes is essential to compensate for social disadvantage and this would take a massive injection of cash into the system. There is also a need for capital expenditure on school buildings, so that pupils who perhaps live in a materially deprived environment are not also being educated in run-down and depressing buildings. The strengths and achievements of the present system need to be valued more. There is a danger that educating as many children as rapidly and cheaply as possible will take precedence over the richness of children's educational experience. Although most people accept that public services have to be accountable for the money spent on them, we should value education for itself and not purely in market force terms.

The rapid pace of educational change may also have an adverse effect on working-class pupils. If teachers are constantly being taxed to the limit by the need to keep up with non-stop change, they are unlikely to be sufficiently aware of the needs of **all** their pupils. For politicians, the solution to the need for greater educational productivity may be simple - make teachers work longer hours with shorter holidays. However, an exhausted and demoralised teaching force is unlikely to retain enough energy to tackle effectively the problems of social disadvantage. When the pressure seems remorseless, the temptation is to focus on survival strategies, rather than thinking about wider educational issues. In the long run, speeding up the pace does not necessarily produce a more efficient system.

CONCLUSION

By drawing on my own experiences I have tried to show how schools and teachers may, perhaps unconsciously, discriminate against working-class pupils. However, instead of blaming teachers, I have emphasised that most have a strong belief in equal educational opportunity for all. Recent developments such as Standard grade have the potential to improve education for all pupils, but may fail to achieve this because there is insufficient recognition that pupils start school on an unequal footing and therefore some require additional help. A national commitment to eliminating the effects of a disadvantaged background is needed. It must be properly resourced, arrived at after proper discussion with the professionals and given realistic goals. It must possess an honest desire to see comprehensive schools succeed for all pupils. A former pupil, when asked the purpose of school, replied : 'It's to get the best for you'. Those in charge of comprehensive education should be prepared to invest generously in our children's future to get the best for all of them.

4
RACISM AND EDUCATION: ISSUES FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

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> Racial discrimination has no place in the education service in Scotland. All educational establishments and education authorities have an important responsibility to work towards the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity...
>
> *Michael Forsyth MP, Minister of State for Education and Health at the Scottish Office*[1]

[1] *Commission for Racial Equality, 1991*

All mainstream political parties are agreed on the need to eliminate 'racial discrimination' but there are fundamental disagreements over precisely what would count as 'discrimination' and how best to eliminate it. Here I hope to illuminate some of the debates by reviewing recent findings which emerge from research on 'race', ethnicity and education. Biologically distinct human races are an invention of science's racist past. However, the notion of 'race' still carries great weight as a socially constructed category: it is in this sense that the term 'race' is used throughout this chapter.[2] Although most of the material is drawn from England and Wales, several aspects of the current debate, and information on the complex dynamics of racism inside schools, are likely to be of particular relevance in the Scottish context. Certain demographic factors differ from those in the rest of the UK, nevertheless, there is evidence that in terms of unemployment, racial harassment and educational attainment, ethnic minorities in Scotland may be disadvantaged in ways which mirror the position of their counterparts south of the border.[3]

[2] *See Cashmore, 1988; Gillborn, 1990*

[3] *Sharp & FitzPatrick, 1991; Smith, 1991*

This chapter begins by examining data on the educational achievements of black school students. By 'black' I mean all people of ethnic minority background who share a common position as victims of white racism. After clarifying some of the ways in which racism has been defined, I then turn to qualitative material which helps us to understand the ways in which racism is modified and reinforced through daily interactions in classrooms and around the school. The focus here is on the experiences and achievements of secondary school students: research in other sectors suggests that racism is no less important an issue in primary schools[4] or institutions of higher education.[5] I focus on the experiences of students of South Asian ethnic origin – a group which is absent from much academic research despite their high concentrations in some areas. The chapter ends with a handful of key issues which might usefully be included in an agenda for future work.

[4] *Grugeon & Woods, 1990; Reay, 1991*

[5] *Singh, 1990; Siraj-Blatchford, 1991*

THE NOTION OF UNDERACHIEVING ETHNIC GROUPS

During the 1980s, much of the debate on 'race' and education concerned the question of achievement. In particular, attention focused on the relative performance of different ethnic groups. Building on a definition of equality of opportunity which had reached prominence on both sides of the Atlantic it was argued that any significant difference in *average* group achievement would indicate the existence of inequalities of educational opportunity.[6] Such an approach, of course, assumes that 'talent' is randomly distributed amongst different groups in society, regardless of variations in ascribed status. Hence, it is legitimate to expect a similar proportion of each ethnic group to succeed academically. Consequently, where one or more ethnic groups achieve average levels which are below those of majority students, there is said to be evidence of group *under*achievement. By examining hard outcomes, rather than being concerned with questions of individual intent and 'prejudice', this view of educational opportunity represents a significant advance on previous approaches.[7]

[6] *Evetts, 1970; Halsey, Heath & Ridge, 1980*

[7] *Dorn, 1985*

In 1981 the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups published an interim report which stated that Afro-Caribbean children '*as a group* are underachieving in our education system'.[8] This verdict, based on a comparison of ethnic group achievement in a handful of local education authorities (LEAs), was repeated in the full report.[9]

[8] *Rampton, 1981, original emphasis*

[9] *Swann, 1985*

Although the notion of underachievement passed into most educationists' vocabulary, an awareness of the complex issues surrounding the concept did not. Hence, 'black educational underachievement' became one more negative stereotype to add to the succession of barriers which already faced minority students. In particular, conventional wisdom came to portray Afro-Caribbeans as somehow destined to fail. Many people lost sight of the fact that talk of underachievement related to group *averages* and, therefore, held no predictive power in individual cases. In addition, despite the primacy which the Rampton and Swann reports gave to figures produced by the DES Statistics Branch, neither survey controlled for social class – a factor which is known to be strongly associated with educational achievement. As Barry Troyna has stated:

> The greatest danger lies in the possibility that ill-conceived and poorly formulated studies will perpetuate the notion of black educational underachievement as a *given* rather than as a problematic that requires sensitive and systematic interrogation.[10]

[10] *Troyna 1984, original emphasis*

We must, therefore, be especially cautious when examining data on the achievement of ethnic minority groups. Nevertheless, such information is crucial if we are to understand the current situation and identify possible areas of disadvantage. Unfortunately, reliable data are hard to come by.

The findings of the most up-to-date, and (to my knowledge) the only nationally representative, survey of educational achievement by ethnic group and social class in England and Wales confirm the general pattern revealed in most previous surveys, ie Afro-Caribbean students, on average, achieved less well than their 'Asian' and white peers.[11] This pattern holds true even when

[11] *Drew & Gray, 1991*

controlling for social class; Afro-Caribbean students from professional/managerial backgrounds did not perform as well on average as white and Asian students from similar social backgrounds. However, social class was associated with educational achievement *within* each ethnic group. That is, children from professional/managerial backgrounds achieved higher results, on average, than children from the same ethnic group but of 'intermediate' and manual backgrounds. It would appear, therefore, that social class is a significant variable regardless of ethnic origin.

It is interesting to note from this study that 'Asian' students appeared to be doing as well – and in some cases better – than comparable white students: once again, this finding replicates much previous work. There are, however, two critical points to be borne in mind when interpreting these data. Firstly, as Drew and Gray are quick to point out, although their sample is both large and nationally representative, once researchers begin to control for several variables at once (in this case, gender, class and ethnic group) individual cell sizes shrink dramatically – reducing the basis for generalisation. Secondly, the simple category 'Asian' does not reflect the cultural, historical and political variation within this group. By placing students of Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani background, for example, in a single aggregate category important differences in experience and achievement might be lost. This is evident from another study which compared the average examination score of inner London students by ethnic group in 1987.[12] While Pakistani and Indian students achieved an average score which was higher than most, Bangladeshi students performed much less well. This highlights the problems of aggregating data: both the highest and lowest achieving groups (Indian and Bangladeshi respectively) are often subsumed into a general 'Asian' category.

[12] *Nuttall & Varlaam, 1990*

The relative achievement of ethnic minority students is, therefore, an extremely complex issue. Indeed, a recent study of 18 multi-racial comprehensives in England demonstrates just how misleading talk of group 'underachievement' can be.[13] In a comparison of children obtaining 'O' level (or equivalent) pass grades in a range of subjects by ethnic group the most striking finding was that each group out-performed the others in at least one subject. Hence, as a group, 'West Indian' students achieved relatively more passes in English than both UK/Eire and South Asian students, yet did significantly worse in mathematics. The South Asian group did proportionately as well as, or better than, UK/Eire students in science, commerce and Asian languages. Given such results, talk of group 'underachievement' may be misleading and potentially dangerous.

[13] *Smith & Tomlinson, 1989*

So far I have drawn on survey findings from three different sources. Although each has certain strengths and weaknesses it should be remembered that only one sample was nationally representative and (because of different definitions of ethnic group) none of the surveys are directly comparable. Although a great deal of statistical work has been published there are still very few certainties. It does appear that as a group Afro-Caribbean students have tended not to perform as well on average as their white peers. However, talk of 'underachievement' now seems rather too

simple. In addition it should be noted that people speak of the underachievement of certain *groups*, rather than the underachievement or failure of the education system itself. In this way a tendency to 'blame the victim' is repeated.

In recognition of the problems which now surround the notion of underachievement, Cecile Wright has argued that the terms 'disadvantage' or 'inequality' are more suitable because they draw attention to the 'structural and institutional realities within which the situation of the black student within the education system needs to be understood'.[14] Wright is one of an increasing number of researchers who have recognised that however sophisticated the survey, statistics tell a very one-dimensional story. Whatever the 'true' level of ethnic group achievements, surveys reveal little or nothing of the processes which lie behind the numbers. In order to understand how ethnicity is reflected in the day-to-day realities of school life we must move beyond the school gate and into the classroom.

[14] *Wright, 1987*

DEFINING 'RACISM'

Accusations of racism in schools have always caused a great deal of controversy. Before looking at some of the evidence produced by qualitative studies, therefore, it is useful to consider the ways in which 'racism' has been defined.

There is no single definition of 'racism' upon which all practitioners and researchers are agreed. Certain understandings have gained in importance, however, reflecting their currency as tools of academic research and/or legal safeguards to the rights of minority groups. A definition which some professional associations have accepted, and which many practitioners find useful, equates racism with a combination of prejudiced views and the institutional power to put those views into action. Hence:

Prejudice + Power = Racism.

This approach has a good deal to recommend it. The emphasis on power – the ability to influence the life-chances and experiences of other groups – helps draw attention to real issues rather than theoretical or philosophical debates. The definition does not deny that black individuals may hold prejudiced views, but by focusing on those who have most opportunity to exclude and exploit attention is directed towards the major problem – white racism. The notion of 'prejudice', however, may weaken the force of this definition.

Although 'prejudice' can take many forms, in common-sense usage the term evokes an image of relatively clear-cut and rigid judgements, often held through ignorance or fear. Such a view seriously underestimates the size of the problem. Many people who would reject crude notions of racial superiority may nevertheless act in ways which disadvantage members of one or more ethnic minority groups. It is in such cases that *'institutional racism'* is such a powerful concept.

> For too long racism has been thought of in individual psychological terms reducible to the actions of prejudiced individuals. The concept of institutional racism draws attention to the structural

[15] *Commission for Racial Equality, 1985*

workings of institutions which exclude black people regardless of individuals' attitudes.[15]

Hence, institutional racism can operate through rules, formal procedures and informal practices which disproportionately affect members of an ethnic group. Even if a policy or action is well intentioned, it may be judged to be racist where its effects are against the interests of one or more ethnic groups. The Swann report, for example, attacked separate provision for Asian students in language centres as a case of institutional racism which denies 'an individual child access to the full range of educational opportunities'.[16]

[16] *Swann, 1985*

The concept of 'institutional racism' is crucial because it cuts through endless arguments regarding individual motivation and intent. The concept establishes the simple fact that a rule or expectation which is applied to everyone is not necessarily fair nor just: policy-makers, practitioners and researchers must focus on the *actions* which shape students' experiences of school. As the following data make clear, despite relatively equitable average achievements, there is a good deal of evidence that more must be done to improve the position of students of South Asian ethnic origin.

THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDENTS

Much of the debate on 'race' and education has focused on the achievements of Afro-Caribbean young people: the majority of qualitative research has tended to marginalise the experiences of South Asian students. In this section I briefly review some of the main work which has focused on the school lives of Asian students, paying particular attention to relationships between students of different ethnic origins and teacher-student interactions.

Relationships with peers

I spent two years tracing the school experiences of students in two mixed ability forms in a large co-educational school, serving a predominantly working-class inner city area, which I have renamed 'City Road Comprehensive'. Around 20% of students were of ethnic minority background, the largest groups being of Afro-Caribbean and South Asian origin – the latter mostly Muslims of Pakistani parentage. Field work began as the students negotiated their third-year option choices (aged 13 and 14), subsequently I followed them throughout their fourth year and into their fifth, and final, year. I gathered data through interviews (with staff and students), participant observation (in lessons, assemblies and after-school events), questionnaires and documentary sources (such as school records).

By the end of their compulsory schooling most of the South Asians in the year group I studied were connected via a network of shared friendship choices. This confirms a pattern which emerges from a good deal of quantitative and qualitative research, namely that as students get older they tend to choose a greater proportion of friends from their own ethnic group.[17]

[17] *Rowley, 1968; Kawwa, 1968; Jelinek & Brittan, 1975; Smith & Tomlinson, 1989*

In City Road the Asian students' ethnicity – their sense and display of a common ethnic identity – acted as a force which united them on several

occasions. During Ramadan, for example, some of the Muslim boys became especially close as daily they came together at the mosque and shared in the problems of satisfying the (sometimes conflicting) demands of the school day and their duties of religious study, prayer and observing the fast.

Equally important in uniting the Asian students in City Road was their almost daily receipt of harassment at the hands of white peers. Racial harassment is not restricted to the classrooms and playgrounds of school; in the early 1980s it was reported that Asians were 50 times more likely than whites to be the victims of racially motivated attacks.[18]

[18] *Home Office, 1981*

Both the Commission for Racial Equality and the Swann report drew attention to the 'extra-crippling dimension brought to [name-calling and bullying] by racist motivation'.[19] Racist name-calling, for example, not only insults individual victims but also their family, their community, their culture – everything with which they identify. Unfortunately, many teachers are unaware of the seriousness of incidents in their schools. Even when teachers witness physical aggression against Asian students, this is sometimes treated as simple boisterousness – a response which both victim and aggressor may interpret as sanctioning further racist attacks.

[19] *Commission for Racial Equality, 1988*

The following examples illustrate the reality of racial harassment for Asian students: the first is taken from an essay by an Asian fifth-former,[20] the second is from my field notes on life in City Road Comprehensive.

[20] *Reported in Swann, 1985*

> I attended a middle school where approximately 90% of the pupils were white. The results of this situation were terrifying. The group of black children were bussed to the school and then isolated from their neighbourhood. At home they were again isolated from any school contacts. During the four years I spent in that school, not one person attended any after-school activities for fear of walking through the neighbourhood where about 92% of the population were white... At school the situation was the same. The Asians were constantly in fear of being attacked by the several gangs of white boys. As we ran towards the staff room a teacher would come out and disperse the white gang, throw us back into the playground and then walk back in as if nothing had happened. The teachers had no idea of what we were experiencing.

> At the end of the lesson, Ian Taylor [a white boy known as 'the best fighter' in the group] was collecting the pupils' exercise books when he moved around behind Sadiq, put his left hand on the back of Sadiq's head and tried to force the Asian pupil's face onto his desk. Sadiq [one of the smallest and weakest pupils in the group] took no other action than to brace himself and resist the pressure: he did not actually try to stop Taylor.
>
> The teacher saw what was happening and immediately ended the incident with a sarcastic, '*Ian*... Collect the papers, don't bang Sadiq on the desk – he's small enough as it is'.

These examples help us to understand the ways in which teachers' responses to harassment can be interpreted as sanctioning further racism. In both cases the teachers successfully ended the particular incidents which they witnessed, however, their failure to recognise the significance of the attacks – as white racist assaults – meant that the racism behind the incidents went unchallenged and was, in the students' eyes, tacitly accepted.

It is, therefore, imperative that educationists recognise and act against racist incidents in schools. Some researchers have supposed that where Asian students display high levels of academic motivation they are unlikely to be experiencing 'difficulties children would notice, such as racial hostility at school...'.[21] Such a view fails to grasp the complexity of life in schools, and the strength and resilience of those who have to live with white racism.[22] The academic success of some South Asian students should not be interpreted as an indication that all is well.

[21] *Smith & Tomlinson, 1989*

[22] *Gillborn & Drew, 1992*

Teacher-student interaction

Although qualitative work on the experiences of Afro-Caribbean students is now established as a significant part of the sociology of education, less research has focused on the interactions between white teachers and students of South Asian ethnic origin. Where researchers have looked at both Afro-Caribbean and South Asian students their work indicates that the latter tend to experience school more positively. This is not to say that teachers hold any less stereotyped views of South Asian students and their home communities, rather the stereotypes are somewhat different. In direct contrast to Afro-Caribbean students, for example, in City Road teachers tended to assume that Asians would be highly motivated, quiet and very well behaved. Teachers believed that most South Asian families would support the school and have high aspirations for their children.[23] Similarly, Mac an Ghaill has shown how teacher stereotypes operated to the benefit of Asian students in the school that he studied:

[23] *Gillborn, 1990*

> The West Indians are tough. I tried not to let anyone influence me in how I treated them but they look at you with wild eyes if you tell them to sit down. They are looking, expecting trouble. They are more prejudiced than white people. The Asians are better, you tell them to do something an' they are meek an' they go an' do it.
>
> This is the first year I've had a class in which most of them could cope with the work as the exam results have shown. Without being too crude, if we're honest it's because we're getting Asians now and not West Indians. Though there's still a lot of thickies.[24]

[24] *Quoted in Mac an Ghaill, 1988*

This picture, of a relatively more positive 'caricature' of Asian students, emerges fairly consistently in studies of schools that include significant proportions of both South Asian and Afro-Caribbean students.[25] However, building on students' retrospective accounts of their school lives, Mac an Ghaill has tentatively suggested that 'in schools where there was a majority Asian student population with a mainly white minority, the dominant images of Asian youths appeared to be negative'.[26] Unfortunately, very little research has been reported from schools which fit this description; existing work, however, does provide some support for the suggestion that teachers' stereotypes of Asian students operate differently where the student population is differently composed.

[25] *Amos & Parmar, 1981; Brah & Minhas, 1985; Griffin, 1985*

[26] *Mac an Ghaill, 1989*

Shepherd[27] studied teachers' perspectives in 'Lumb Green', a large 9–13 middle school with 'an almost wholly South Asian intake'. He notes that the

[27] *Shepherd, 1987*

teachers held powerful negative views concerning the students' language abilities, the maintenance of a strong community infra-structure in general and the influence of Islam in particular:

> The staff equated the children's experience of Islam with the inculcation of submission, acceptance and conformity, which they saw as detracting from the children as pupils and opposed to the values and aims of the staff and the school.[28]

[28] Shepherd, 1987

The following quotations illustrate the kinds of perspective which dominated staff thinking in the school. The belief that the home community worked to the students' disadvantage is clear in the first quotation, which also demonstrates the continued popular appeal of assimilationist arguments which embody a racist 'belief in the cultural and racial superiority of the "host" metropolitan society'.[29]

[29] Mullard, 1982

> When you think about it, for a lot of our children when they've left school their life is set out for them – especially the girls but even the boys – they'll do the work their fathers do – work in shops or whatever – they're just not interested... We don't help them to become [Westernised] anyway. In some ways we're bending over backwards to them. We're not helping them at all to get on in this society. We're segregating them even more in some ways. We do everything in our power – like showers – school meals – Halal – Why should it be like that really? But then again it depends on your priorities. They've come to this country, their children come to school. Are they going to value education and get on? Is that more important than living in their own little world? To my mind they just come to school and there's no point. A lot come to school just to pass the time. Their home life is more important to them. The mosque and anything to do with their own culture. Should it be like that?[30]

[30] Quoted in Shepherd, 1987

Shepherd argues that students' difficulties with the English language created a major problem for teacher-student interactions; certainly he provides data which show the persistence of crude racial stereotypes. The following extracts are from a single interview: initially the teacher complains of having had to lower his/her expectations in line with the students' ability. Yet the same teacher interprets students' requests for further explanations as indicative, not of problems of understanding, but of a desire to avoid work.

> When I first came into the fourth year I was dreadful – going home, sleepless nights – worrying about the children. All I got told was you've just got to accept it, to accept that they're not capable of doing what you expect – you expect too much of them.

> I have a class and I'm teaching them, and I know 60% won't know what I'm talking about. You get one kid will say 'What? I don't understand' and the rest of them do the same. It just seems so false, they pretend not to understand.[31]

[31] Quoted in Shepherd, 1987

It may be, therefore, that at the heart of teachers' beliefs about South Asian students lie a series of stereotypes which are articulated differently in various school contexts. In Lumb Green Middle School,[32] Kilby Boys' School[33] and City Road Comprehensive[34] the teachers shared a belief in the stability and

[32] Shepherd, 1987
[33] Mac an Ghaill, 1988
[34] Gillborn, 1990

unity of the South Asian students' home communities. Whereas teachers in Lumb Green (with a majority of Asian pupils) saw this as a problem, in those schools that also included a significant proportion of Afro-Caribbeans the Asian students' home backgrounds were believed to offer a source of support upon which the schools could build.

Although South Asian students have not received as much research attention their situation may be no less affected by white stereotypes than that of their Afro-Caribbean peers. The available evidence seems to suggest that the stereotypes may operate differently where Asian students make up the majority of the school population or potentially where they are the main ethnic minority group. More research is necessary on this point but existing work raises especially disturbing questions for those working in areas where relatively large South Asian communities make up the bulk of the ethnic minority population, such as parts of Scotland, the Midlands and Northern England.[35] Additionally, there is clearly an urgent need for action to raise the awareness of teachers who may, usually unknowingly, currently be condoning racial harassment in their schools. Unless these issues are given proper attention, it is likely that, whatever their conscious intent, many teachers will continue to act in ways which are racist in their consequences.

[35] *Runnymede Trust, 1991; Smith 1991*

AN AGENDA FOR RESEARCH & PRACTICE

Matters of 'race' and ethnicity seem destined to remain key educational issues for the foreseeable future. This section highlights some questions and controversies which are likely to generate a good deal of debate in the early 1990s. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but to suggest possible avenues of future work and to illustrate the range of issues which require further attention.

Academic selection & institutional racism

It is likely that black young people will be unfairly disadvantaged wherever students are sorted according to a behavioural or academic standard which is defined by white people. Calls for more frequent and standardised forms of assessment in schools are increasing, often linked to external factors which affect the curricula that schools teach and the criteria by which they are judged. In England and Wales, this is related to the imposition of a statutory curriculum and a system of national standardised testing. In Scotland the 5–14 developments may have similar consequences.

Ethnic minority students are destined to face additional inequalities of opportunity if the drive towards increased testing and selection is mirrored in greater differentiation in schools. In the case of Afro-Caribbean students, research suggests that teachers tend to perceive a greater behavioural threat in their actions, leading them to label such students as disruptive – and therefore likely to be placed in lower sets where resources and teacher expectations are relatively poor.[36] In the case of South Asian students, teacher assessments early in their school lives may seriously disadvantage those for

[36] *Gillborn, 1990; Wright, 1986*

whom English is not their mother tongue; work in England has indicated that monolingual teachers frequently under-estimate the abilities of bilingual students. In addition, bilingual students attain significantly higher levels in their standard assessments when bilingual support is available.[37]

[37] Pitt & Grimble, 1992

At a more fundamental level, recent developments raise the spectre of widespread selection and exclusion via psychological tests – an area which has an appalling record in relation to the treatment of ethnic minorities.[38] 'Race' and 'intelligence' are two concepts for which there are no universally agreed definitions, yet attempts to resurrect past debates about the 'intelligence' of different ethnic groups persist.[39] A particularly worrying development is a recent attempt to rehabilitate the reputation of Cyril Burt – one of the founding figures in British intelligence testing. Burt's work was the inspiration for authors such as Arthur Jensen and Hans Eysenck who argued that genetic factors lay behind significant differences in the average measured intelligence of different 'races'.[40] These authors conveniently reassessed their debt to Burt when it was revealed that he had falsified data.[41] More recently a campaign has been waged to rewrite history, painting Burt as the victim of a pro-comprehensive/anti-selection conspiracy. Although the evidential basis for such claims has been fundamentally questioned[42] the campaign has continued.[43] The importance of this debate should not be underestimated. If Burt's work can once again be clothed in scientific respectability a huge boost will be given to those who argued that 'intelligence' is not equally distributed between 'races' and that psychological tests are a fair and accurate way of sorting people into different groups. In such circumstances standardised testing could emerge as a publicly-funded means of institutionalising racism on a grand scale.

[38] Kamin, 1974

[39] Mackintosh & Mascie-Taylor, 1985

[40] Jensen, 1969, 1972; Eysenck, 1971, 1973, 1981;

[41] Lawrence, 1977; Kamin, 1974, 1981

[42] Hearnshaw, 1990

[43] Burstall, 1991

The separate schools debate

The Swann report opposed calls for separate schools by members of some ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the issue has continued to generate controversy and has gained impetus as a result of legislation passed during the 1980s. The Government has consistently refused applications for voluntary aided status by groups wishing to establish Muslim schools. The so-called 'opting-out' provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Act, however, offer a new avenue for those wishing to retain state funding whilst changing the character of a school. Moves have begun to encourage opting out in schools which serve predominantly Muslim populations in places as far apart as Glasgow's West End and the East End of London.[44] To date the campaigns have been surrounded by controversy and even if a majority of parents do vote for Grant Maintained status it is unlikely that the present Conservative Government would allow the changes. How long such pressure can be resisted is uncertain.

[44] Hennessey, 1991; Sen & Nurmohamed, 1991

The separate schools debate raises important, and difficult, questions about the rights of different ethnic groups to choose where their children should be educated. At the time of writing, in practice black parents are denied the opportunity to establish state-funded Muslim schools, yet white

parents have the right to remove their children from a school if they disapprove of the ethnic balance of the student population. In October 1991, a High Court ruling against the Commission for Racial Equality effectively established that parents' right to choose (even on racist grounds) takes precedence over the safeguards of the Race Relations Act 1976. At present, therefore, *de facto* segregation by white racists is permitted, whereas black moves to establish denominational schools are blocked.

The development & application of sensitive monitoring procedures

At the national, local and school level we need to know more about differences in the experience and achievement of ethnic minority students. It is necessary to gather relevant material in ways which are sensitive to the concerns of ethnic groups and communities (including white students and parents) and sophisticated enough to answer pertinent questions. While not easy, progress is possible, and can help to draw attention to issues which might have been dismissed as anecdotal or fanciful in the absence of relevant data. The collection of admission and exclusion data by ethnic group, for example, may help to alert schools and authorities to possible cases of institutional racism where ethnic minority students are not equitably represented. Such a move has helped to establish the case for further initiatives in at least one LEA where Afro-Caribbean students were grossly over-represented in exclusions from school.[45]

[45] *Nottingham LEA, Advisory & Inspection Service, 1991*

Where more research is needed

Despite the wealth of research already conducted many crucial questions remain unanswered. Most research has focused on the experiences of children from only a small number of ethnic minority groups. In some parts of the UK, for example, there is a significant Chinese population, yet relatively little is known about the school experiences and levels of achievement of pupils of Chinese ethnic origin. What research has been conducted, suggests that this group may experience particularly severe disadvantages which go largely unnoticed where the students are dispersed over several schools and where a range of stereotypes operate to place Chinese young people at the margins of classroom life.[46] Work on the experiences of Afro-Caribbean and Asian students has established that racism operates in complex and sometimes unpredictable ways; in attempting to establish greater equality of opportunity it is essential that we know more about the ways in which different ethnic minority groups are currently disadvantaged.

[46] *Swann, 1985; Simpson, 1987*

One of the most pressing needs is for work that addresses the uncertainty which surrounds the practice of multi-cultural and anti-racist education. There is no room here to rehearse the various differences between multi-culturalists and anti-racists, suffice it to say that the debate has been characterised by a great deal of ill feeling and unconstructive rhetoric.[47] One way forward may be to examine the question of what constitutes good

[47] *Gillborn, 1990*

practice at the school level, bringing theoretical insights to bear on the grounded experience of teachers and students as they work through multi-cultural and anti-racist issues. This offers an especially exciting agenda since it may enable greater dialogue between policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and ethnic minority communities. Such a dialogue is essential if we are to challenge the inequalities which are currently reproduced throughout the educational system.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people who, at different stages of the research process, have helped me enormously: Tina Cartwright, David Drew, Julia Evetts, Susan Harris, Danny Lawrence, Nicholas Sime, Mark Tranmer and Shafeeq Ulhaq. Special thanks to Joyce, Jim and Dorn Gillborn without whom this chapter would never have been finished.

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5
TURNING A MULTI-CULTURAL AND ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION POLICY INTO PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

This paper gives an overview of one Region's work to develop a policy for Multi-cultural and Anti-Racist Education (called for convenience MCARE) and turn it into practice. It outlines briefly the context in which Central Region provides its education service and then describes first, how the Regional guidelines on MCARE were designed to support the policy[1] and second, the framework being established for implementation. That framework is concerned particularly with aspects of staff development and of evaluation. Finally, it raises some of the issues and questions which should be addressed in the future.

[1] *Central Region Guidelines, 1988*

Like most new policy developments what is described is incomplete in that it represents a dynamic process in which innovation and change must take account of many other variables.

The work to date has been developed by a Regional advisory group on multi-cultural education with a varied membership and chaired by a depute director of education. The group includes members from Stirling University, HMI and Moray House and Jordanhill College as well as from the Stirling Islamic Centre, the Central Scotland Chinese Association, the Italian community, the Central Scotland Racial Equality Council and the Central Scotland Community Interpreting Group. Members from the Central Scotland Racial Equality Council, and from Stirling University and Moray House have continued to participate on the smaller Steering Group which advises on and plans staff development and the evaluation process.

A MATTER CONCERNING ALL SCHOOLS

Although the minority ethnic population in Scotland is small and the Region has schools with no ethnic minority pupils at all, the policy is based on the belief that the issues of prejudice, discrimination and racism are matters of concern for all schools and education services. Frequently, the harshest of the realities of life for black pupils reflect the attitudes and beliefs of the white communities in which they are living and learning. We accept that just as sexist attitudes and beliefs can develop within an all male school or workplace, so racist attitudes and beliefs can develop within all white environments. As an education authority, therefore, we cannot ignore the need to scrutinise the service we are offering to all learners in terms of the messages it conveys regarding racial equality.

The Region's policy on MCARE locates the principles of equality and justice at the heart of all good educational practice. Its implementation means demonstrating how the issues of equality are valued throughout the ethos and activity of the school or service. In practical terms this means that we believe that we cannot be effective, for example, in delivering 5–14 curriculum developments or assessment strategies, in developing guidance systems or in formulating school development plans and management styles unless these have been thought through in a framework of the equality issues.

A SIMPLE POLICY & CHALLENGING GUIDELINES

In 1988 the Region issued its policy on MCARE to all schools and establishments and requested that the Regional Advisory Group devise guidelines to take that policy into practice.

The policy is brief. It presents four broad aims with which few, if any, are likely to argue. It aims:

- to challenge and discourage prejudice, discrimination and racism;
- to improve equality of opportunity;
- to ensure the principles of MCARE are reflected in the resources, the curriculum and the ethos of all schools and services;
- and to ensure through resourcing and training that the principles are understood and supported by all staff.

The simplicity of the aims is attractive, but by the same token their uncontroversial nature represents a particular challenge. For if we believe we agree with such principles we may be lulled into thinking that there is no further action we should take. The guidelines aim to raise awareness of the practical implications of these aims and to engender a commitment in teachers to review many aspects of their working lives. Most particularly, the guidelines seek to support those at management level, the gatekeepers of policy implementation, who take daily responsibility for developing policy into visible good practice.

A combined multi-cultural/anti-racist approach was adopted to indicate that the best aspects of multi-culturalism have been embodied within an overarching anti-racist commitment. Thus, a curriculum which aims to develop an understanding of similarities and differences between culturally based experiences should be delivered in a framework which also understands the forms of injustice and power relationships which may have affected those experiences. Similarly, an ethos which seeks to foster understanding and respect for individuals must also be clear about its supportive stance to victims of prejudice or discrimination.

The guidelines are designed for all sectors and services of the education department and they present MCARE as an holistic approach to all that the department offers. They include, but are not restricted to, responding to racist incidents and present the MCARE approach as one which must be developed in a proactive as well as a reactive fashion.

THE GUIDELINES: PROACTIVE

The proactive section of the document examines five key areas in context from nursery to tertiary level, with an additional section on employment. Those selected are:

- the curriculum
- resources
- language (encompassing the language environment for all learners as well as the specifics surrounding bilingualism and community languages)
- the ethos of the school or establishment
- training and development for staff.

The proactive section is especially important as it values the influence, and indeed the responsibility, of the school or sector environment in contributing to the erosion of racism in society. The guidance offered recognises that all learning needs to take place in contexts where concern for cognitive development is matched by concern for the affective development of the learners. As generations of educators have done before us, we aspire to prepare youngsters not just for employment or academic achievement but also for their future as thoughtful, caring and responsible adults.

Young people are being equipped with an increasingly sophisticated array of knowledge and skills to prepare them for participation as adults in the twenty first century. Whether it is scientific, technical or concerned with the complexity of the available and developing forms of communication in a shrinking world, that knowledge and those skills need a framework of human values and attitudes which will support their responsible and positive use.

The principles underlying all of the equality issues should create a total learning environment in which what is taught and what is learned at both a formal and informal level supports our tradition of, and our future vision of, education for a just and equitable society. As decision takers either at policy making level, at management level or in individual classrooms we can choose to act as enablers for, or as barriers against, these principles. The guidelines present the case for a MCARE proactive approach to be at the heart of good educational practice.

THE GUIDELINES: REACTIVE

Within the guidelines, the proactive approach is complemented by one which is reactive. The Home Office Report of 1989 on Racial Attacks and Harassment[2] concluded that families living in areas with small minority ethnic communities are *more* likely to suffer from racial harassment or attack than those with larger communities. Minority ethnic families in Central Region are as subject to racist incidents and harassment and attack as those in any other part of Britain. For such families, the horror of their experience can be exacerbated by the lack of effective support or response from agencies such as the policy, education, social work and housing departments because such agencies themselves lack expertise and experience.

[2] *The Home Office Report, 1989*

The reactive section offers specific advice, drawn largely from the

[3]*Commission for Racial Equality, 1988*

Commission for Racial Equality document *Learning in Terror* on identifying and responding to racist incidents.[3] The Region built into this advice its own particular concern, that in a learning environment there is a particular need for effective forms of support for both the victim and the perpetrator, and to actively develop a multi-agency response as recommended by the Home Office Report. It is important that those in the education service are confident and competent in responding effectively to such incidents. It is right too, that they feel supported and that their actions represent part of a region-wide coherent and consistent challenge to racism in the community. The Regional Council is now developing these recommendations across all its services and it issued the MCARE Guidelines at a multi-agency seminar in February 1991 as an exemplar which each Regional department might wish to adapt and develop.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION: THROUGH STAFF DEVELOPMENT

When the guidelines were formally endorsed by the Regional Council in 1990, an important framework was established to ensure that the commitment to implementation would be sustained. This framework included a detailed outline for approaches to staff development and a commitment to evaluate the implementation of the MCARE policy. The Region committed itself to a staff development perspective in which:

- all the issues of equality would be actively linked to present 'a consistent and common strategy which would result in staff development where issues of gender, race and disability were linked'
- there would be an active embedding of issues of equality within all future staff development strategies
- courses on specific issues would be provided to develop the MCARE policy in individual sectors, and further optional courses on the principles of the policy to encourage staff to develop their knowledge and expertise.

The decisions to actively link the issues and to embed them in all staff development are of fundamental importance within the development of the Regional service. They reflect not only a guiding philosophy, or vision, of education in Central Region but also a practical step to ensure coherent and effective good practice. By making such links and ensuring that the issues are placed at the core of all future developments the Regional Council is ensuring that equality issues can neither be marginalised nor set in competition against each other.

A first step towards embedding the issues in staff development was taken in autumn 1991 when the Regional in-service days for all teachers focused on the 5–14 curriculum documents. An aide-memoire providing both some general points for consideration and more specific points relating to individual curriculum areas was given to all the in-service planning groups. General

points included notes about language, resources and models of leadership for all in-service delivery. Specific points were included to point up, for example when discussing assessment, the need to alert teachers to the way various forms of bias and stereotyping might affect perceived performance.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION: THROUGH EVALUATION

The Region has approved a range of strategies for on-going evaluation of the implementation of the MCARE policy. All of these strategies should be seen in the context of the training and development being planned, and in the context of a Regional concern that evaluation should be regarded as supporting implementation and assisting schools and services develop their understanding of the issues and their good practice.

First, there is a recommendation that schools and services use practical review mechanisms based on the key issues in the guidelines. These can be carried out regularly at management level and can also aid individual staff's reviews of their work. At the moment we are scrutinising other existing review mechanisms in schools, those used for TVEI for example, to plan an efficient and effective dovetailing of concerns of equality. Secondly, the Regional Council has given its support to evaluation through research, possibly through an outside body, to gain a picture of current views of the policy which could be reconsidered at five year intervals. Thirdly, the evaluation strategies included the establishment of a 'consumers' forum from schools, colleges and community education to gain information about the experience of those served by the department. Such a forum has yet to be formally established but it is likely that it will evolve from the existing working links which the education department enjoys with a range of community groups. Finally, the Regional Council instructed the director of education to give consideration to mechanisms for co-ordinating policy for education in equality.

THE FUTURE

As I said at the start, the process I have outlined is incomplete and there is much yet to be achieved. Even at this early stage however, there are some lessons that have been learned and some difficulties which can be anticipated and these will contribute to shaping the work in the future.

The first is pace and timescale. The magnitude of the implications of the MCARE policy and its subsequent linking to the other equality issues is something that was not perceived clearly in the early stages. As is the case with many innovations, it was not until work was underway and individuals devoted time to learning and thinking about the issues, that the vision described above began to take shape. It has become clear that for this initiative to move beyond a rhetorical policy, future work on its implementation must become a regular feature of longterm planning. It must be integrated, for example, into Regional approaches to quality assurance and institutional development plans right from the start.

The second matter is that of raising awareness and engendering commitment. Our experience has shown that considerable progress can be made in furthering a MCARE approach when it is welcomed with interest and openness. A key aspect of future work will be developing staff confidence in the legitimacy of this set of issues. We continue to challenge the notion that MCARE is irrelevant in an area with a small minority ethnic population and to present the ways in which the Regional commitment has become a fundamental part of good practice.

The third concern relates to the current climate in which schools and services are operating. This climate is characterised by innovation and change and it can be seen either as a barrier to developing the equality issues or as an opportunity for their development. The Region would see it as the latter. The MCARE approach, which applies to all of the equality issues, does more than provide a challenging and positive framework for curricular and structural developments. Its concern for unifying human and holistic aspects of the education process can provide staff with respite from the pressures caused by the disparate nature of other innovations.

The final consideration for the future is openness. Whereas the Advisory Group as described above has a wide membership and the guidelines in draft form were sent out to an even wider range of individuals and organisations for comment, experience has convinced us of the importance of sustained and also more informal consultation. This is in line with the Regional commitment to 'open management'. In practical terms in this context it means listening, for example to school students, moving beyond 'open-door' policies towards the idea of a consumer forum to feed back experience, and working collaboratively with school staff and those from other services at all levels.

It is reasonable to believe that in Central Region the equality issues are here to stay. It remains to be seen however, whether this basis of good intent and this skeletal framework for policy implementation will be sufficient to improve teaching and learning experience in the future.

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6

GENDER AND EDUCATION: PROGRESSIVE AND CONSERVATIVE FORCES IN THE BALANCE

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INTRODUCTION

Central government in Britain has revealed a deep ambivalence towards gender issues over the past 15 years. Despite the implementation of equal opportunities legislation in the mid 1970s, there has been reluctance to pursue the policies necessary to make gender equality a reality rather than a pious hope. The run-up to the 1992 General Election, for instance, witnessed the hype of Opportunity 2000, supposedly designed to boost the profile of women in public and private corporations but in reality offering little in the way of concrete action. Equal opportunities may now be part of the respectable political agenda, but intervention to alter the status quo is certainly not.

In education, acceptance of the need for action to ensure progress towards gender equality has been painfully slow. During the 1970s, it was generally regarded as a fringe matter, which was, at best, interesting but of little relevance to education. At worst, those who asked questions about power relations in education were seen as dangerous subversives. To some extent, that tide has turned and the need for greater gender equality is now more generally accepted. The encouragement of equal opportunities was part of the remit of TVEI and many local authorities in England and Wales, and regional authorities in Scotland, have produced policies on gender equality and have appointed advisers and development officers with responsibilities in this area. Real cultural change in schools, however, appears to be much more difficult to bring about. Partly this is because there are no easy prescriptions, as is revealed by the debates emerging from both research and practice concerning the nature of the problem and possible solutions.

The paper begins by offering an overview of Scottish research on gender and education, highlighting the different picture which emerges from quantitative and qualitative analyses. Subsequently, it draws on studies undertaken both within and outwith the Scottish context to identify aspects of gender relations in education where change appears to be taking place. These include the nature of femininity and masculinity in educational institutions, the nature and impact of gender equality policies and the impact of recent government policy and legislation.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

The Scottish Office Education Department includes gender as a variable in the descriptive statistics presented in its bulletins. These provide a fascinating

starting point for those interested in the relative positions of males and females in the Scottish education system. They reveal, for instance, that girls are routinely out-performing boys in many areas of the curriculum. This prompted an article in the *Times Educational Supplement (Scotland)*[1] entitled 'Advantage Girls' which argued that schools were favouring girls and discrimination against boys and reasons for boys' disadvantage should be the topic of future research. Further study of the statistics, however, suggests that the picture for girls is not quite as rosy as the author of this article suggests.

[1] *Times Educational Supplement (Scotland), 21.7.89*

The gender spectrum still persists in the curriculum, with boys concentrated in physical science and technology and girls in business studies and arts. It appears that the broad education which Scotland prides itself in offering young people does not provide similar educational qualifications for girls and boys and the differing curricular paths taken by girls and boys in school is reflected in their post-school careers. Although the proportion of girls entering higher education has overtaken that of boys, fewer girls who matriculate with three or more Highers progress to higher education and the subjects studied reflect the sex stereotyping established earlier in their educational careers.

For those who enter the labour market straight from school, sex segregation is immediately apparent in their areas of work, with females concentrated in service type occupations and males in labouring and manufacturing . This segregation of the labour market has dire consequences in terms of women's economic status. Thus in the UK, a decade and a half after the Equal Pay Act, women's gross full-time weekly earnings are still only 65% of men's[2]. The relative proportions of female to male pay has actually worsened and the gap is currently at its widest since the Act was passed.

[2] *Coyle, 1988*

Some regional authorities have also analysed statistics in relation to gender equality. Strathclyde Region,[3] for example, has reviewed girls' and boys' performance in public examinations and surveyed teachers' attitudes to promotion procedures. The survey found that a higher proportion of women than men voluntarily remained in unpromoted positions, but it was not able to shed much light on the processes producing this outcome.

[3] *Strathclyde Department of Education, 1988*

Although Scottish Office Education Department statistics and work commissioned by regional authorities offer insights into girls' and boys' levels of performance in school and focus on some key indicators of attitude or motivation, they do not provide an analysis of how important variables interact. For this we must look to the work of the Centre for Educational Sociology at Edinburgh University (CES). Willms & Kerr[4] consider examination attainments and report that whereas ten years ago there were no sex differences, by 1984 there was a considerable female advantage. This was greatest in rural areas, perhaps resulting from poorer work opportunities causing girls to stay on at school longer, gain higher levels of examination attainment and have a higher rate of entry to post-secondary institutions than the national average. McPherson & Willms,[5] drawing on data from the Scottish School Leavers' Survey, conclude that comprehensive reorganisation in Scotland has been associated with the raising of standards of attainment.

[4] *Willms & Kerr, 1986*

[5] *McPherson & Willms, 1987*

particularly among females and pupils of lower socio-economic status. Using data from the same survey, Paterson[6] argues that class inequality in entry to higher education is tending to diminish for both girls and boys.

[6]Paterson, 1991

These findings give some indication of how the work of CES has identified interactions between gender and class and their influence on pupils' educational attainments in Scotland. However, the kinds of analysis used do not shed light on the processes shaping male and female identities in school. Unless this wider social context is taken into account, the conclusion from girls' examination performance could suggest there is really no problem.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

Turning to qualitative research on gender and education, it is clear that here work has tended to be small-scale. Bamford[7] in a review of research on gender and education in Scotland, shows that much of this work has been masters' dissertations rather than larger-scale funded research. These have included a number of meticulously researched and insightful historical studies of girls' and women's experiences of the Scottish education system, but less work on classroom processes at pre-school, primary or secondary levels. An exception to this rule is Delamont.[8] whose ethnographic study of the education of an elite group of girls in a private school is insightful, but clearly very different from the experience of the vast majority of Scottish schoolgirls educated in the maintained sector.

[7]Bamford, 1988

[8]Delamont, 1984

Fewell & Paterson have gone some way to remedying the dearth of literature on gender and the culture of Scottish education. Their edited collection consists of historical and contemporary accounts of the process of girls' schooling and the experiences of women teachers. The editors provide an interesting overview of the tradition of Scottish education arguing that, notwithstanding girls' superior academic achievements, 'gender inequality is embedded within the structure and texture of Scottish education.'[9] It is precisely because of its embeddedness, they suggest, that it has gone unchallenged for so long. 'Its absence as an issue is not because there is no problem, or because any problem is in the process of solving itself, but because until recently its existence as a problem has not been identified.' According to Fewell & Paterson, the reality of deeply institutionalised sexism has been concealed by a mythology of the excellence and egalitarianism of Scottish education, closely tied to Scottish national identity.

[9]Fewell & Paterson, 1990

Accounts of girls' experience of the Scottish education system based on quantitative and qualitative data, therefore, leave us with a puzzle. Statistical analysis shows that girls are performing better and appear to be less alienated from the experience of schooling than boys. Many female teachers and pupils, however, experience institutionalised sexism as part of their everyday lives. To make sense of these apparent contradictions we need detailed accounts of classroom processes and school cultures. Research of that kind, mainly undertaken outwith the Scottish context, has revealed the existence of both progressive and conservative forces influencing the nature of gender relations in educational institutions.

MASCULINE & FEMININE CULTURES IN SCHOOL

Some of the most interesting work on gender and education over the last twenty years is concerned with pupils' cultural groupings and how these interact with the culture of the school. I use the term culture to refer to the cluster of behaviour, attitudes and values which people use to make sense of the world. Girls' and boys' cultures within school are likely to have very different characteristics and working-class and middle-class girls and boys may adopt different versions of masculinity and femininity (some with the official seal of approval and others seen as challenging the status quo).

[10] Willis, 1977

In the 1970s, Willis[10] provided fascinating insight into the world of a group of rebellious working-class lads. Starting from the question, 'how do working-class kids get working-class jobs?' Willis spent many hours in their company, searching for the answer. He suggested that the lads' contempt for education was founded on a celebration of the world of hard physical labour in the foundries where they were likely to find work. Learning was characterised, by contrast, as effeminate, only suitable for the despised ear'oles (conformist working-class lads), girls and black pupils. Although their scorn for school and teachers gave them a brief sense of power and control, ultimately it reinforced their powerless position in society as unskilled labourers.

[11] McRobbie, 1978

McRobbie[11] argued for similar questions to be asked about working-class girls, but for them the central issue was 'how do working-class girls get working-class husbands?' She described the power of romance in girls' lives, with marriage as the inevitable goal, but using idealised images of boys to sweeten a prospect which they could see from the lives of their mothers was far from rosy.

[12] Riddell, 1992

My own research on girls in comprehensive schools in the south west of England in the mid 1980s[12] suggested a different picture. Although the girls made sex-stereotyped option choices and saw almost every subject on the curriculum as more suitable for one sex or the other, the language of feminism had entered their world. They described certain boys and male teachers as sexist or male chauvinist pigs, and were able to provide a critical commentary on the ideology of romance. Claire, for instance, when asked what she thought she would be doing in ten years time commented:

> 'Well, I want a house that's modern and nice, modern couches and everything, all in white and red, and you've got this man of your dreams, and you sort of fly away to holidays and go to all these places and then you look at somebody in real life and you think, 'Good heavens'.'

Talking to a group of working-class girls about their decision to choose a double option of secretarial studies, I was surprised that most had little enthusiasm for secretarial work, expecting it to be boring and poorly paid. Their choice was strongly influenced by the local labour market: office work was one of the few areas likely to offer employment. Their mums and sisters worked in local offices, and even though they thought girls should have the

chance to be mechanics if they wanted to, it did not strike them as a realistic possibility.

These working-class girls' balanced radical and conservative visions of women's role in society and classroom observation did not reflect the view of female passivity suggested by earlier research. Although the general pattern was for noisy and attention-seeking behaviour to be a male rather than a female characteristic, a small group of the working-class girls used rowdiness and sexual aggression to assert their power over teachers. As a disruptive tactic, it was all the more effective since it was borrowed from the male rather than the female repertoire of expected behaviour.

It seemed, then, that girls' culture was undergoing change and was strongly affected by the external labour market. Recent studies in Australia and the USA indicate that this process may have progressed even further. Weis' study of working-class girls in Buffalo, USA, a town affected by relatively recent massive male unemployment, suggests that girls increasingly define their lives in terms of work, with marriage and motherhood perceived as goals to be achieved after establishing a niche in the labour market. Romance is given short shrift in this new order. She notes, however, that boys' culture has not changed significantly; they still regard power over women in the home as their natural right – a potentially explosive situation where 'male and female identities are currently on a collision path'.[13]

[13] Weis, 1990

It is apparent, therefore, that male and female cultures in school are changing, with girls revising their self perceptions in the light of their shifting economic role. The forms of such changes within the Scottish context, however, are as yet unclear. What is certain is that girls' prioritisation of domestic over working roles can no longer be assumed.

ON THE NATURE & IMPACT OF GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

Altered views of gender relations are not only the result of economic changes, but also of active attempts by schools to foster greater gender equality. However, although most feminists agree that change is urgently required in school, there is no unanimity about the type of policies needed. Weiner distinguished two approaches to promoting gender equality in school: the 'equal opportunities' and the 'anti-sexist' approaches. The first of these, derived from a liberal political philosophy, emphasises issues of access and initiatives designed to encourage girls into non-traditional areas of the curriculum and the labour market. Barriers to their entry into these areas are seen as deriving from old- fashioned prejudices which can be changed by rational argument.

Anti-sexist approaches, on the other hand, see sexism in school as part of a general pattern of female subordination. Whereas those who adopt the equal opportunities perspective see advantages for both girls and boys in eliminating curriculum sex-stereotyping, the anti-sexist approach does not hold out the promise of a happy-ever-after outcome. Weiner explains:

> In this [the anti-sexist] view, expanding educational opportunity is not just a question of juggling resources or rearranging option choices. It is far more fundamental than that. If girls and women are to capture a greater slice of the educational 'cake', boys and men will have to give up their hold on the system – something they are unlikely to do without a struggle.[14]

[14] Weiner, 1986

Furthermore, the equal opportunities approach as reflected, for example, in EOC publications, may be damaging because it tends to hold up male subject preferences and career patterns as the norm into which women must fit if they want equality. Traditional female interests and experiences are thus seen as in need of change.

Weiner is firmly in the anti-sexist camp, suggesting that egalitarians stick to relatively safe issues, such as having registers in alphabetical order and allowing girls to wear trousers. She argues that contentious issues, such as sexual harassment in schools, which are likely to polarise women and men, will only be raised by those who recognise that schools reflect power structures based on male dominance.

Although the distinction between the anti-sexist and equal opportunities approach is an important one, nonetheless I feel that it is possible to overstate the dichotomy. Many feminists tackle what might be regarded as liberal issues such as patterns of option choice, but do not lost sight of the goal of raising awareness of power relations more generally. Whylde[15] expresses succinctly the need for pragmatism when she states, 'Working within the system does not mean you have to give up the fight to change it.'

[15] Whylde, 1983

A more important question concerns the effectiveness of equal opportunities policies and my own research illustrates some of the barriers that are commonly encountered. Although both schools paid lip-service to equal opportunities, all but a small minority of feminist teachers were either hostile or apathetic towards the implementation of such policies. By concentrating on the need to provide the best education possible for individual children ('I teach individuals, not sexes'), teachers tended to ignore the implications of their actions for groups. They also were suspicious of positive action programmes, believing that the fundamental principle of a school's political neutrality might be compromised. Most teachers failed to acknowledge any channelling process in the school, and sex-stereotyped subject choices were blamed on factors external to the school. The refusal to admit the school's part in reproducing social inequality was reflected in and supported by the option choice system, characterising pupils as free-floating individuals making choices in a social vacuum and accepting the future consequences of their actions.

Writers in the UK and Australia have disagreed about the success of equal opportunities initiatives of the past 15 years. Acker,[16] describing the English context, presents a depressing picture 'in a situation where neither government dictates nor conventional teacher ideologies nor conditions of work promote and support anti-sexist innovation, feminist futures seem grim!' Connell,[17] from an Australian perspective, also acknowledges

[16] Acker, 1988

[17] Connell, 1986

teachers' inbuilt resistance to innovation (as likely to worsen their working conditions) and the chance that equal opportunities policies may be less welcome than other policies (requiring teachers to examine their personal as well as professional lives and confronting male teachers with the loss of their privileged position within schools). Nonetheless, Connell asserts, feminist ideas have had a marked effect on the educational scene and real change is evident in the seriousness with which girls' education is now treated. In the light of these disagreements, there is a strong argument for taking stock of what has been achieved by gender equality policies to date. Evaluation studies aimed at providing a better understanding of what succeeds and fails in particular contexts would be invaluable in guiding future work.

THE IMPACT OF RECENT LEGISLATION

So far, I have concentrated on areas where pressure for change appears to be shifting the balance of power in favour of females. I now turn to the impact of recent legislation, which, although frequently failing to address gender issues, nonetheless often has hidden implications for the education of girls and boys. South of the Border, where policy in relation to gender has been extensively debated, its impact has been regarded as essentially retrogressive. In Scotland, there has to date been less public discussion of this aspect of the government's educational agenda.

Let us first look at the argument surrounding the national curriculum and assessment. First, it is worth noting that debates concerning the curriculum and gender equality pre-date the present discussion of the national curriculum. Liberal feminists like Byrne[18] have seen a common curriculum as an essential pre-condition of equal opportunity, whilst radical feminists, like Elliott and Powell[19] have expressed anxiety about the privileged status such a curriculum might bestow on traditionally masculine areas such as science. I have argued that a relatively free option-choice system is likely to promote inequality, since pupils may well make sex-stereotyped choices and retain a sense of personal responsibility for the unequal educational outcomes which result. However, despite criticisms of the curricular option-choice system, many feminists have been less than enthusiastic about the form and content of the national curriculum and are suspicious of the motives of its instigators. Alison Kelly[20] has been one of the few commentators who has given it support, arguing that it will open up science and technology to girls. She states: 'despite eight years of Thatcherism, science education is currently moving in a democratic direction.' A more frequently expressed view, however, is that insofar as the government wishes to see more girls in science and technology, this is to meet the needs of the economy rather than to advance the cause of social justice. Arnot[21] is critical of the government's dismissal of gender as a serious concern in the construction of the curriculum, and foresees the perpetuation of 'a national hidden curriculum in which traditional assumptions and discriminating practices happily co-exist'.

[18] Byrne, 1985

[19] Elliott & Powell, 1987

[20] Kelly, 1988

[21] Arnot, 1989

In my view, some of the more gloomy predictions about the dire consequences of the national curriculum may well turn out to be misplaced. Its many transformations since inception suggest that it will probably look fairly similar to the previous option-choice system. For example, in August 1988 an amendment was inserted allowing pupils to take a single science option occupying 10% of curriculum time rather than the original 20%. Girls are likely to be over-represented in this group. Furthermore, a range of vocational courses will continue to co-exist alongside national curriculum subjects, and these too are sex-stereotyped. Increasing curricular choice within the national curriculum is likely to produce the type of individualised curricula so heavily criticised by Kelly.

To summarise, although there are a number of arguments which suggest that a common curriculum might be of benefit to girls, the national curriculum is unlikely to prove a positive force in promoting gender equality. This is due, at least in part, to the failure of its architects to take serious cognisance of gender issues in its construction.

Writers south of the Border have also considered the significance of gender in relation to national testing. Gipps[22] (1990) notes that stereotyping in teacher assessment may be a problem for both black pupils and girls. We have evidence for this in the past when, for example, girls and boys who did equally well on maths tests were differentially allocated to 'O' level or CSE.[23] Girls were seen by their teachers as 'not really bright' and 'working to their full potential' while boys were 'really bright' but 'under-achieving'. Gipps comments that even if teacher assessment includes a wide range of tasks with detailed guidelines, bias is still likely to creep in since there are 'scores of boys and girls who perform marginally at a particular level to be edged up or down'. She is not concerned about test item content bias, however, since development teams will endeavour to ensure that sexual stereotypes are omitted.

[22] *Gipps, 1990*

[23] *Walden & Walkerdine, 1985*

In the context of national assessment and the national curriculum for England and Wales, worries have also been expressed concerning the position of women in the various task groups and the attention paid to the issue of gender equality in the various documents. Burton & Weiner[24] note the overwhelming predominance of males on all the groups and Gipps criticises the Task Group on Assessment and Testing Report[25] for devoting only 21 lines to bias and equal opportunities. Burrage[26] points out that DES curriculum proposals for English, Maths, Science and Design & Technology all draw attention to gender equality issues, although, she suggests, at a rather superficial level. Nevertheless, the Science Proposals do go so far as to suggest that girls' traditional suspicion of science may be a product of subject content and presentation as well as cultural attitudes.

[24] *Burton & Weiner, 1989*

[25] *Task Group on Assessment and Testing, 1987*

[26] *Burrage, 1991*

While there has been widespread debate concerning the implications of the national curriculum and assessment for gender equality in England and Wales, in Scotland there has been relative silence on the corresponding implications of the 5-14 programme (although Brown[27] touches on this). On the face of it, however, many of the concerns of commentators in England apply equally to Scotland. It is striking that none of the final reports of the

[27] *Brown, 1991*

Scottish Review & Development Groups (RDGS) which are publicly available at the time of writing address equal opportunities. (This is in contrast to the equivalent curricular documents for England and Wales which do refer explicitly to equality issues.) Indeed, references to equal opportunities which were included in the working papers have been removed from the final reports, on the grounds that the report of RDG 6, unpublished at the time of writing, would deal with cross-curricular themes including equal opportunities. The confinement to a separate document conveys the impression of an add-on rather than integral part of the curriculum. There also appears to be a question mark as to whether the report of RDG 6 will be published by the SOED or the SCCC, implying uncertainty over its status. All these factors contribute to a sense that gender equality and other social justice issues are of only peripheral concern to central government. At a conference on multicultural/anti-racist education within the 5-14 programme in January 1992, Barr of the SCCC asserted that the programme's main features were perfectly compatible with the goals of education for equality. It is clear, however, that the major responsibility for implementation of these policies is seen to lie with individual teachers.

To summarise, both north and south of the Border, recent legislation carries implications for gender equality. In England and Wales, where the issues have been extensively debated, the consensus view is that the overall effect is likely to be supportive rather than challenging of existing gender divisions. In Scotland, there has been less public debate on the impact of recent legislation on gender issues. The SOED, however, has signalled in a number of ways that it does not intend to play an active role in the promotion of social justice issues.

UNCERTAINTY OVER THE FUTURE

It appears that in both the wider society and the education system there is uncertainty over the future of the struggle for gender equality. On the one hand, equal opportunities is now regarded as a respectable issue – even a Conservative Prime Minister uses it as an electioneering issue with impunity. Despite the acceptability of the rhetoric, to go beyond matters of access to question social structures and institutions in a more profound way is extremely difficult. 'The problem' is still couched in terms of girls and women fitting into male career patterns and adopting male modes of behaviour, rather than questioning whether these need to change.

Nonetheless, although the present political climate may not be conducive to the pursuit of social justice in education, there are some grounds for optimism. This paper has identified a number of progressive forces with regard to gender relations in schools. Partly in response to changes in the external labour market, there is evidence that the culture of femininity is shifting, with girls defining their future lives in terms of work as well as domesticity. Equality initiatives in schools have raised awareness and there is evidence that regional authorities intend to continue their work in this area. The question which remains to be answered is whether teachers will be able

to continue to challenge inequality in school in the absence of firm backing from central government.

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7
GENDER ISSUES: POLICY INTO PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

One interesting feature of my experience, initially in assessment centres and special education and more recently developing behavioural support services, has been how rarely teachers have raised gender issues with me. Such issues only become the focus of attention when 'official policy' is discussed, and this is usually concerned with access arrangements rather than the nitty gritty of pupils' experiences in the classroom or matters directly affecting teachers.

In general, if equal opportunities policies are to effect positive change, they will have to operate beyond the 'overall organization' level. They must intrude into the life of the classroom and personal interactions and so influence how people think and act. Unfortunately, it is often the case that where local authorities, with their attendant political power, adopt an apparently non-discriminatory and 'neutral' stance, the effects can work against the very people they are intended to serve. Paradoxically, this stance may prevent the tackling of some of the real barriers to opportunity, the social deprivation and the stigmatisation which affect children living in the least privileged urban areas. The main purpose of this paper, therefore, is to identify what I see as some of the major issues of gender which arise in educational contexts in Scotland and to look at ways in which policy priorities for the future might address those issues.

CONDITIONS INFLUENCING THE SUCCESS OF POLICIES

The value of equal opportunities policies for practitioners is dependent on the extent to which everyone concerned understands and accepts their basic principles and purposes, agrees on action to be taken and takes that action to achieve implementation. All these can be endangered by commonsense but misguided notions of differences between boys and girls, and by differences of opinion about positive action to discriminate in favour of one sex or the other. (Such action may be seen as reflecting current practice, usually in favour of boys, or as desirable for the future, usually in favour of girls). The term gender is itself problematic. In this paper I use it to refer to differences between the sexes that are socially constructed and maintained in the minds of people through the interactions of daily life.

Successful implementation of gender policies will only be achieved if the principles are discussed and debated at all levels of the education system. Furthermore, the basic purpose of promoting the educational achievement

of girls, regardless of class or ethnic origin, has to be recognised. That purpose carries with it implications which have been denied over the centuries in the political responses to the attempts which have been made to change the place of women in society.[1] Popular beliefs about sex differences have influenced the teaching and learning of boys and girls, whether taught separately or together, and 'neutrality' (which has been manifest as indifference) has preserved a status quo in gender relations in the classroom.

[1] See Spender 1982

Within the classroom, we can see the effects of beliefs held by adults about the intellectual differences between boys and girls, and about the origins of those differences. The promotion of boys to the disadvantage of girls is evident; the teaching process is clearly playing a part in reproducing the traditional, stereotypical relationships of gender (and, indeed, of race and class) in society. As French argues, widely held beliefs and suspect practice have resulted until recently in the 'effective handicapping' of girls in intellectual competition, and demonstrate the lack of genuine investment in their potential as future citizens.[2] The starkest example of this was perhaps the stacking of marks in the old 11+ examination in favour of boys. The fact that girls who had scored higher than 'successful' boys were denied grammar school places could only be legitimised on the assumption that it was more important that the boys were allocated the places.

[2] French, 1991

In conjunction with matters of inequality in the classroom, the matter of the promotion of women in educational careers has to be considered. This is of crucial importance in relation to the 'models' which are presented to girls. In my own authority the vast majority of promoted posts in secondary schools are held by men, although the total number of male teachers is substantially less than the number of women teachers. It also appears that men are scaling the promotion ladder much faster than women do (if they progress at all). Unfortunately, data in a form that would lend itself to an analysis of rates of promotion is not currently publicly available. If it were, we would be in a better position to understand the nature of the disparity and might well be able to conceive of new routes to successful careers for more women in education.

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS

The attitudes of parents are particularly important. For example, a study of the ways in which social forces shape attitudes to and performance in mathematics concluded

> our data suggest that social and attitudinal factors have a greater influence on junior and senior high school students' grades and enrolment in mathematics courses than do variations in mathematical aptitude. Further, our data suggest that sex differences in mathematical achievement and attitudes are largely due to sex differences in math anxiety; the gender-stereotyped beliefs of parents, especially mothers; and the value students attach to mathematics.[3]

[3] Eccles & Jacobs, 1986

Mothers, it appeared, were more inclined than fathers to devalue their daughter's intellectual capacities, though all parents were willing at some

point to believe that boys were innately cleverer at mathematics than girls. A few 'dads', however, were prepared to concede that this general advantage of boys over girls did not apply to their daughters. More commonly, attitudes seem to conform to the kind of thing illustrated in a recent headline in the *Times Educational Supplement*: "Girls playing chess. British dads are seen to be less than enthralled with the idea of intellectually gifted daughters".[4]

[4] *Times Educational Supplement*, 12.7.91

French cites instances of sons' futures being viewed as more worthy of concern and investment within the family than are daughters'.[5] This parental preference appears to be rooted in a continuing conviction that a woman's real job in life is to marry and receive, at least in part, financial support. In consequence, it is expected they will give up the opportunity to compete with men for earning power. This is an agenda of gender-related issues which teachers have to tackle. That agenda has to be seen as arising from a set of socially transmitted attitudes which have to be overcome if girls are to compete on an equal basis and be allowed parity of intellectual status.

[5] *French, 1991*

STEREOTYPES IMPOSED BY SOCIETY

In society generally, traditional male and female stereotypes support parental discrimination and perpetuate the identification of particular careers as appropriate for boys or girls. The stereotypes reinforce cultures of passivity for girls[6] and ensure male dominance in most social contexts. Boys are brought up to dominate public space and to control girls, and the sexes come to use differing discourses in everyday language.[7] The stereotypes are summarised by Bardwick and Douvan as being for girls and women:

[6] *Rich, 1982*

[7] *Tannen, 1991*

> the stereotypical picture is one of dependence, passivity, fragility, low pain tolerance, non-aggression, non-competitiveness, inner orientation, interpersonal orientation, empathy, sensitivity, nurturance, subjectivity, intuitiveness, yieldingness, receptivity, inability to risk, emotional liability, supportiveness.

And for boys and men

> independence, aggression, competitiveness, leadership, task orientation, assertiveness, innovation, self-discipline, stoicism, activity, objectivity, analytic-mindedness, courage, unsentimentality, rationality, confidence and emotional control.[8]

[8] *Bardwick and Douvan, 1971*

These adjectives describe the idealized, simplified stereotypes of normal masculinity and femininity. They also describe real characteristics of boys and girls, men and women. While individual men and women may more resemble the stereotype of the opposite sex, group differences between the sexes bear out these stereotypic portraits. The question of how society (and particularly schools) socialises its members to conform or not to these stereotypes is an important one. An even more important one asks how girls may be emancipated through an education which enables them to lead lives in which they are economically independent, make choices for themselves, become responsible for their own successes and failures and develop their assertiveness. This will involve a challenge to traditional roles for the sexes and concern with the harassment and over-protection of girls. Investing in the future for girls means investing in their share of control.

To achieve this it is essential that we concentrate on the common strengths, skills and intellectual capacities of boys and girls. Attention must be focused on factors which accommodate male and female employees equally, particularly in management positions within education, business and the work place more generally.

PRODUCING REGIONAL POLICIES

We must now ask how the policies in one region can relate to these issues and what will constitute success. Tayside Region recently formulated a policy statement on gender issues which has been pioneered alongside those for multi-cultural education and special needs education.

The policy aims to:

- promote equality of opportunity for all, regardless of gender, in all areas of the Education Service
- provide equality of access for all pupils, students, clients and other user groups
- break down the barriers associated with gender discrimination
- require all staff to be actively involved in creating a climate of equality
- influence positively the expectations of parents and the wider community[9]

[9] *Tayside Region Education Department, 1991*

This statement of position has been arrived at over one year by a short-life working group, chaired by a senior member of the directorate and serviced by an equal opportunities project officer. The group represented the spectrum of provision in the Region. In principle, it followed the Region's intention to develop policies and guidelines attending both to inequalities associated with social injustice and the promoting of equal access. Schools have yet to be asked to state their position and to identify issues pertinent to their situation. Draft guidelines for schools are being produced and a small editorial subgroup will comment on in-service training and staff development to support the implementation process.

The implementation of this kind of policy is not without problems. Unfortunately the promise of fair and equal competition can be undermined by current trends towards opportunism and entrepreneurialism which serve to keep girls, particularly working-class girls, in second place. The egalitarian ideals evinced in the rhetoric of policies are difficult to realise.[10] Moving out of neutral and into gear can prove difficult, especially in times when the social injustices of poverty, oppression and abuse (physical, emotional and sexual), of children offer the greatest barriers to opportunity.[11] But as well as a need for general social strategies to improve living conditions and alleviate poverty, it is important to take account of the fact that early signs of potential success for girls are not reflected by commensurate success of women in adult public life. Girls with such potential are currently socialised to give way to males

[10] *Erskine, 1990a*

[11] *Erskine, 1990b*

at many junctures and in many different ways, in the kitchen and in the boardroom, and boys are unprepared for any change in this pattern which could signal freedom for women in private and public life.

MONITORING SIGNS OF SUCCESS

How could a review of the effectiveness of gender policies in, for example, one secondary and its associated primaries be carried out? Should evaluation be treated as a 'dialogue rather than an occasional reporting mechanism' as suggested in the context of gender issues in Suffolk TVEI?[1]

[1] *Fiddy, Loose and Stronach, 1986*

If the process is to be dynamic, all staff will have to be included in the decision-making. Realistic targetting over, say, a five year plan will be necessary. That will involve the identification of what is to count as 'success' and what the pace of progress can reasonably be expected to be. Principal teachers will be key figures in the promotion of equal opportunities in their subject areas, and successes in formal examinations and other areas (within and beyond secondary school) will have to be monitored.

At primary school level, monitoring of performance at Primary 4 and Primary 7 will have to be complemented by regular reviews of assessment processes to ensure they take account of the strengths of both girls and boys and do not penalise or intimidate either sex. Progress by year and by sex should be documented in individual schools.

At the same time it will be necessary to be aware of the practice of teachers. Does that practice reflect an understanding that it is not only what is said to young people that matters? Can staff and children identify, understand and interpret examples of prejudice and disadvantage? Working groups, responsible to senior management, may be set up, but the support of local action groups and school boards will also be essential. It is not difficult to appreciate the central role that good communication must play in this scenario.

POLICY INTO PRACTICE

In the context of the Dundee COMPACT, we can see examples of the kind of questions which have to be addressed. In this initiative, young people in Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 opt in voluntarily to a work-related training experience as part of their education. This is a business enterprise involving employers, schools, young people and their parents in four secondary schools. One purpose of the initiative is to offer an improved chance of employment in areas where rates of unemployment are high and socio-economic status is low. The central evaluation questions for such a scheme must include matters of gender. For example:

- who opts in and why?
- who does not opt in and why not?
- is the initiative targetting the group originally intended?
- what success do they make of it?

- are there any signs that choices are still gender stereotypical?
- what roles and responsibilities are the boys and girls accepting or being assigned?
- are things changing over time or do the statistics merely reflect a traditional female/male division?
- will the information continue to be kept in a way that will allow us to answer these questions?

In so far as findings relating to such questions identify disadvantage to either sex, they have to be acted upon. But it has to be recognised that in this example the questions (and so the underlying policy) are concerned primarily with equalising access to facets of education and not so some of the deeper gender issues. Resolution of those puts a heavy responsibility on teachers since 'it is in the classroom that real issues of inequality and social justice, gender equality and racial discrimination can be effected.'[13]

[13] *Carr, 1991*

The purposes and principles of policies will only affect the educational experience of pupils if teachers want them to. That is the challenge. Policies which operate only at levels of the organization may be limiting rather than facilitating. The real issues for teachers remain deeper and concern the socialisation of young people in the community.

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8

THE INTER-CONNECTIONS OF GENDER, CLASS AND ETHNICITY WITHIN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

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INTRODUCTION

Sound educational practice is informed by the concepts and values of equality and justice. Yet many within the education community view the area of anti-discriminatory education as irrelevant, not applicable to their particular viewpoint, establishment, authority or region. The issues of equal opportunities are often seen as the domain of a few radical individuals. Others, on the other hand, are anxious to ensure that individuals and institutions do not latch on to the adoption of equal opportunity policies and staff development packages as a cure-all or an end in itself – a fast acting immuniser to discrimination or a way of silencing criticism. Adoption of these policies is only the first step in changing educational institutions and the wider society. The views I put forward in this paper have been based on a decade's work in anti-discrimination in Scotland, particularly in the area of anti-racism. These experiences have been gleaned from in-service and consultancy work within both statutory and voluntary sectors ranging from pre-fives to tertiary.

In this paper, I wish to make the argument that no progress will be made in the area of equal opportunities unless

- we acknowledge that racism, sexism and class inequalities are not accidents of history and that shifts in power relations are essential to bring about change
- we develop an awareness of the processes of structural oppression, the ways in which sexism, racism and classism are inter-related and the impact of other forms of discrimination such as those based on age, disability, sexuality and religion
- we confront the contradictions and dilemmas which arise when we tackle equality issues in conjunction with each other rather than in isolation.

THE NEED FOR A POLITICAL APPROACH

In my years of in-service work, the two most common reasons given to me for not tackling the issues of racism, sexism and classism are 'these issues are too political, we are here to educate not politicise' and 'it doesn't happen here'. Coupled with these is a simplistic notion that challenging discrimination is 'simply a matter of overcoming errors, raising awareness of such errors and adopting 'adequate' corrective mechanisms.'[1] This is a position which does not recognise or take seriously the effects of these issues on the lives of

[1] ARTEN, 1989

individuals and communities. More importantly it does not recognise the fact that racism, sexism and classism are more than just a set of ideas or beliefs – they have become systematised into a philosophy of race, gender and class superiority which is central to the way our society is organised as a whole.

Hence to begin to make connections between these types of discrimination requires us to move away from a political position to one that encompasses a political analysis. Unfortunately state bureaucracies, educational institutions and practitioners see being political as being synonymous with being unprofessional. We regard a practiced professional detachment as essential for neutral and fair practice. If we educate within this approach, our practice may be informed but safe and aware but unchallenging to the status quo. We will bring about no real change but merely make symbolic gestures and tinker at the edges. It is naive to hope that the elimination of racism, sexism and so forth will be achieved simply through goodwill, harmony and learning about each other's lifestyles and cultures.

Nor is it enough to play the numbers games – 'have we at least 50% girls in physics this year?' Even if this were the case, if girls in physics classes are still receiving negative messages about their worth, then little will have been achieved. We should be clear that working for equal opportunities involves a serious challenge to power structures within educational institutions which have traditionally worked in the interests of white middle-class males. It is not just about life-styles but about life chances, it is not the arithmetic but the politics of equal opportunities we should be concerned with.

THE NEED TO TACKLE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ISSUES TOGETHER

In an ever-changing educational climate, if we do not have a political analysis which allows for the relationships between race, class and gender to be analysed together with ideologies of power and exploitation then we will continue to have a hierarchy of oppressions (we need to tackle class, gender, race first...), of people campaigning on single-issue platforms, unable to see how all these issues are symbiotic. Equality cannot be divided like pieces of a cake and shared out. If we do not make the connections, we will find that in attempting to develop equal opportunities strategies, we will inadvertently discriminate further by compartmentalising issues, allowing faddist strategies to occur and contributing to the polarisation of views.

A complicated set of human relations made up of many strands cannot be slotted into a simple male versus female, middle versus working-class, black versus white, pigeon-hole. It is this pigeon-holing we in the education community must address and deal with both personally and professionally. Pigeon-holing assumes that there is uniform access to power and privileges for one group and uniform denial of access to power for another. Clearly, this is not the case.

Let me illustrate the dangers of pigeon-holing with reference to the murder of an Asian schoolboy by a white boy in the playground of a Manchester comprehensive school in 1986. An inquiry into the circum-

stances surrounding the murder suggested that anti-racist policies had been insensitively handled, polarising the black and white communities. In the report of the committee set up to investigate the murder, a teacher describes her realisation of the sense of exclusion felt by the white community when she was handing out letters from the school's ethnic minority advisory group to black pupils to be taken home to their parents:

> 'As the boys were coming out for the letters, one of the white boys came and I said, 'I'm very sorry, there is not a letter for you' and he said, 'Why not, Miss?' and I said, 'Because these meetings are only for the Asian and black students', and then it suddenly clicked that the only time our white parents are invited into school are parents' evenings, careers evenings or presentations evenings; no other times are they communicated with in terms of what is happening in the school, and what the school has to offer their children, and what the school is doing as a community.'[2]

[2] *MacDonald et al, 1989*

The school clearly took seriously its anti-racist policies and was attempting to involve and empower black parents. However, the end result of ignoring white parents was increased divisiveness. Were white parents not part of the anti-racist struggle or concerned with issues of racism?

THE NEED TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS & CONTRADICTIONS

We are going to be faced with many conflicts of ideas and values in our attempts to interconnect. Since our educational institutions cater for adults and children from such a wide range of cultural groups and class backgrounds, it is almost inevitable that at some point people will find their home values, standards and expectations are different from those of the school. There is a tendency for there to be an unwritten and unspoken belief that 'the school is always right' – it is a bit like us being in awe of our GP and the infallibility of his or her medical advice. Because schools may reflect the culture of the middle-class white males who still occupy most of the positions of power, pupils may find it difficult to identify with the school and the educational process. For instance, in a primary class talking about hygiene, different ways of keeping clean may be discussed. In Britain most people use baths or showers. However in some cultures, the concept of running water in the act of cleansing is important so showers would be acceptable but not baths. If a teacher is unable to understand this and treats this concept as odd or backward then pupils in that class may find their home and educator's values mismatching. This causes the pupil confusion. These types of confusions are compounded if the pupil has learning difficulties. Other contradictions I have come across are conflicts which arise when we find inconsistencies between different aspects of equal opportunities policies and initiatives. For example, we may accept the use of halal meat but find that this is challenged from within the animals rights framework. Conflicts may also arise in the context of our feelings about arranged marriages which are perceived by many in the western world to be in direct conflict with women's rights and emancipation.

Ideological dilemmas such as these, arising from clashes between different

value systems, are inevitable and educational institutions will have to work hard at developing solutions to these problems. A fruitful way forward may be to encourage students to examine the significance of gender, ethnicity and class in their own lives. The linking of the different parts of their own experience (for instance, as Scots, as women, as black Scots, as black working-class Scots) will potentially lead to a development of a critical awareness concerning the complexity of their personal identity, friendships and relationships. This could be a superb example of good practice and a model for equal opportunities practice for the future.

In the light of the Burnage Report, referred to in the previous section, there is a need for political education which allows young people to make connections themselves by identifying what they have in common with each other rather than what is different. Students of whatever background have common interests as students. We must be prepared to accept those interests may not necessarily be the same as that of the school or of parents. It is important, however, to note that currently there is widespread confusion between the need to inform ourselves and pupils about different life-styles and value bases and the need to devise strategies and methodologies that challenge discriminatory beliefs, values and actions. In our attempts to link issues, we need to have clarity of terminology and a sharper understanding of the prevalence and depth of discrimination in education today.

In the area of anti-racism, the aspect of equal opportunities with which I am most familiar, there is sometimes confusion over whether to adopt a multi-cultural or anti-racist strategy. The two are distinct and may not naturally link. I am aware of multi-cultural strategies being operated where white pupils are being taught to respect black cultures and religious preferences. However, not much work, if any, is being done with the white pupils to assist them in exploring their feelings about ethnicity and their racist beliefs. Yet it is crucial this is done for, at the very least, it assists them in placing the oppression of black people in its proper perspective and at best it helps to create links between categories of disadvantage.

CONCLUSION

Developing our work to embrace an anti-discriminatory approach is not simple. It may seem obvious that people can simultaneously be members of several groups, for instance being of a particular sex, occupying a particular class position and belonging to a particular ethnic group all at the same time. It is not a simple task to work out how these different aspects of our identities both complement and conflict with each other. We may all be 'victims' and also 'victimisers'. For us as educationalists, we are the problem yet we are part of the solution. The need for constant critical examination of our perceptions, attitudes and practice is of prime importance. It is not sufficient to hope we engage in 'good educational practice' and 'treat pupils the same'. There needs to be focused action to achieve an integrated equal opportunities approach giving thought to input, process and output.

Undoubtedly, mistakes will be made and some of the bridges we build will fail to withstand pressure. What is certain, however, is that an uninformed approach and lukewarm commitment will result in empty symbolic gestures that are transparent and reinforce discrimination. This paper does not provide an easy guide to making connections, for none exists. It is my intention to stress the importance of understanding the roots and patterns of oppression and the need to make connections. We live and are operating as educationalists in a period which has promoted individualism, where we see policies that have generated both wealth and poverty – the haves and the have-nots. If we do not address seriously the broader issues of education of which equality of opportunity forms part, then we are devaluing the right of every child to an equal education – a value intrinsic to us in the education community. We need to forge the links between different forms of disadvantage to sustain unity in countering discrimination, no matter how fragile this unity may be at times.

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9

BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE IN THE CULTURE OF A SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

Change in the culture and climate of a school does not happen by accident nor even by good will. Attitudes and actions are changed as a result of a consistent strategy, shared, discussed, planned and followed through. For the purposes of this paper I offer illustrations of how this process may be promoted drawn largely from the areas of ethnicity and gender, not because I think that these forms of discrimination are more important than others such as disability or class, but because that is where most of my experience lies. I believe that the principles which emerge, however, can be applied to any equal opportunities issue. Having said that, I suspect that socio-economic class barriers will prove to be the hardest both to discern and to dismantle.

It was as head teacher of a small inner-city community school in Edinburgh that I first began to be fully aware of the effects of discrimination on people's lives and about the implications of that for education. We had children from a number of minority ethnic groups, mostly children whose parents had come from India or Pakistan but there were also Nigerian, Chinese and Turkish families represented in the school while I was there. The children of Indian and Pakistani origin had almost all been born in Britain. Our first attempts to adopt a multi-cultural, anti-racist curriculum arose out of the wish to be a real community school: our community was clearly multi-cultural and it seemed to us that if we wanted a genuine partnership with the local community the school should reflect the nature of that community.

These early efforts quite soon led us into the general area of inequality and discrimination as it affects different groups and individuals. We began to see that we could not combat one sort of injustice without looking at the other forms which had similar characteristics or manifestations. Our understanding increased as we went on and it became evident that our work had to widen out to encompass all areas of the curriculum and all forms of discrimination so far as this was possible.

RAISING AWARENESS

Awareness is the first and perhaps the most crucial part of the process. No change will come about if people don't think anything is wrong. And, so far as equal opportunities are concerned, a great many people are altogether too complacent, convinced that Scottish schools are pretty even-handed places where anyone who applies herself or himself will do as well as the next person.

It is important, therefore, to show people that all is not well. This is not necessarily easy. Victims of discrimination will frequently deny any such experience. For one thing, it is humiliating to admit to being taunted, excluded, mocked or harassed. For another, discrimination can be so deeply embedded and institutionalised that even those who suffer from it are not necessarily aware that it is happening – or, if they are, they think that is just the way life is. This is the case, for instance, where girls find themselves edged out of the action in the technical classes or computers or physics. Or where children from minority ethnic groups are not given language support because they are superficially fluent English speakers. Furthermore, in some cases – and this applies more to an older age-group, to teachers themselves some times – victims of discrimination can grow accustomed to their role, even comfortable in it, unaware of those things that have been denied to them and of the contribution to society they in turn have been prevented from making. This is exemplified by those women who have opted for or been obliged to assume a subsidiary role in marriage or in a job. It would also apply to people from low socio-economic groups who see university, for example, as 'not for the likes of us'.

GETTING THINGS GOING

In every educational establishment, however, there will be a few people who are sensitive to the issues and prepared to do something about them. It may be that ethnicity is a more burning cause for some of those people than gender is or it could be the other way round. It does not much matter. The one will inevitably lead to the other as it will also lead on to other areas of discrimination. That small group of people should form the nucleus of an established working group, given support from senior staff and with representation from other, possibly less committed groups working alongside them. The process of bringing about change is itself a learning experience.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF EVERYONE

Their first task will be to raise the issue across the school. This can be done in a variety of ways. It is very effective to draw examples of discriminatory practice or features of inequality from the institution itself. This can be done by conducting mini-surveys, using pupils' written experiences (with their permission), photographing or otherwise recording graffiti, inviting pupils and staff to talk about instances of harassment in their lives outside the school – no woman alive has not experienced some form of harassment or is free from the fear of it. If people insist that there is no discrimination within the environment of the school examples from the community can be used. To the 'we have no black children here' claim, it is necessary to point out that pupils are being educated for society beyond the school gates and that, even if they have never experienced or practised discrimination, racism, sexism and all the other 'isms' are deeply harmful and divisive influences which affect all our lives and young people need to be educated to recognise and combat

them. There are, depressingly, plenty of examples in the popular press which can be used for discussion. Sometimes a speaker may be invited in to talk to the staff and there are also videos which can be used to good effect. Any of these initial strategies need to be followed by opportunity for discussion, preferably in small groups each with a well prepared leader. These are not easy matters to get to grips with: strong feelings of anxiety, even anger, are aroused and often expressed. It is important to recognise that that is part of the process.

This initial process of awareness-raising, discussing, clarifying, exploring the implications, seeking support, reading round the subject, will take time. It should not be allowed to slip, however. Because of the pressure of time in schools the mistake is sometimes made of having one session on the subject and then putting it aside. The most effective method is to keep at it over a series of meetings. People will groan 'Not this again!' but such is the complexity of this particular issue and so far-reaching is its potential effect, that a sustained programme is essential. In this way people work through their fears, sort out their concerns and shake themselves down. This process alone will change some attitudes and the climate will have shifted slightly.

SUPPORTING TEACHING & NON-TEACHING STAFF

The role of the head teacher in all this is to provide support and time. S/he must make it clear that this is a matter of high priority and that quality time will be provided on the in-service programme to allow proper discussion and planning for action. It is also important to emphasise, however, that this is not something separate from other departmental or curricular work. Teachers are rightly concerned about the burdens imposed on them by current curricular change and are understandably reluctant to take on anything more or anything which will distract them from what they see as their main tasks. Every effort has to be made, therefore, to show how combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities is part of everything else that is going on. Certainly separate time has to be allocated to it to begin with, so that people can get to a level of awareness which enables them to put the ideas into practice but as time goes on it should become a matter of course and should emerge in all curricular discussions.

At the same time the working party should be ready with practical suggestions for those teachers who are willing to try to implement what they have been talking about. Teachers always want to know what it is they are expected to do. Checklists are useful to enable people to consider their own practice. Books should be available which make suggestions for each subject area. Departments can be encouraged to review their resources, possibly re-write some materials to change the emphasis or produce new materials to take account of equal opportunities issues.

Teaching staff are not the only ones who affect the climate of the school, however. Cleaners, catering staff, auxiliaries, technicians, office and janitorial staff all have a part to play in bringing about the desired change. In-service

programmes should include all staff where appropriate, for example in initial awareness-raising sessions and discussions. This experience itself can be a catalyst because the hierarchical divisions of labour in schools reveal a lot about equality or the lack of it. If this is not possible – because of different working hours, for instance – efforts should be made to provide time and training to fit the needs of each particular group. Much good work by teachers can be undone by the careless words of an unwitting janitor…or vice-versa. Office staff have the right to know why their traditional arrangements of class lists into boys' names and girls' names are to be changed to one of alphabetical order or why the way they speak to pupils or parents may have to be adjusted. More importantly, perhaps, the whole business of role models, who does what in the school, how different groups are regarded or addressed, is one that has to be confronted in the course of these discussions. If schools continue to be run by white men with all the low status jobs held by women it is going to be much more difficult, if not impossible, to effect the sort of radical change that is required. Conversely, a school which is serious about equality will create a climate where the promotion of women is seen as crucial to its credibility and where people from minority ethnic groups will feel comfortable and confident.

INVOLVING PUPILS & PARENTS EARLY ON

It is important that the pupils are involved from an early stage. Guidance staff and group tutors have a key role to play here. The issue of equality of opportunity as it affects the school and therefore themselves has to be explained to pupils and they too need structured time for discussion and an exploration of what the implications are for their behaviour. Young people are quick to take to the ideas. Of course they make mistakes. We all do. Constant cries of 'That's sexist', can become a source of irritation to teachers. But that's just a stage and it passes as the level of awareness within the school rises. What happens is that when racism and sexism and other forms of discrimination are given prominence and are seen to be taken seriously within the school, children feel empowered to report things that previously they would have suffered in silence. Some of the denial stops. This in itself can be taken as a measure of some success although initially it may feel as if the situation has worsened. There was no racism/sexism here before all this started is a worrying accusation but it is never true. Racism and sexism are endemic in our society and they need to be exposed so that they can be dealt with.

Of course, school is only one of the influences in a child's life and parents too must be included at an early stage in these discussions. Every opportunity should be taken to inform parents about what the school is trying to do and why. The school board and parent-teacher association would be obvious groups for full explanations where some examination of the issues is possible. Parents can be invited to become involved in the working group. Newsletters and bulletins can make regular reference to the school's commitment to

bringing about change. These could remind the community of important dates in different cultures, for example; they could highlight what departments are doing to promote equal opportunities; principal teachers might be willing to talk to parents about what equal opportunity means specifically in their department.

UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE

One of the key areas to be tackled and one which comes up quite quickly, is language. Racist and sexist language, language which derides disablement or alienates children with learning difficulties, is a common feature of every school, so common, in fact, that it is often ignored or people think that nothing can be done about it. As a matter of fact, that is one of the more straightforward things that can be done. It is easier to stop people using abusive language, for instance, than to stop them being patronising. First of all discussion has to take place – among both pupils and staff – about language of this kind, its effect on people, why it is different in kind from other forms of genial insult (although, interestingly enough, it soon transpires that more people are hurt than is commonly realised by the good-natured 'slagging' that is such a common feature of children's lives and the whole issue does well to be aired). Nevertheless, calling someone 'cow' or 'wog' or 'spastic' is in a different category from calling them 'fatso' or 'specky', painful though these epithets may be.

This needs to be explained and a clear edict issued that language of that kind is totally forbidden. The consequences of reported incidents should be clear and consistently applied. Many authorities now asks for racist incidents and language to be recorded. Our experience was that in the changing climate of the school children adapted their universal commandment of 'Thou shalt not grass' to accommodate this. Somehow, before too long, it was generally considered 'correct' to report racist or sexist language or language targeted at disability. I would not go so far as to claim that such language was never used but it became exceptional and children felt totally justified in reporting it. Maybe this was because it was seen to be part of a larger issue of human rights and they did not feel they were just reporting it for themselves.

A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

When staff were appointed to the school the point was always made that the school had a commitment to equal opportunities. We tried to give new staff or temporary staff some time with one of the equal opportunities working parties to introduce them to the sorts of things we were pursuing but pressure of time meant that this did not happen as regularly as we would have liked. Indeed, it would be a mistake to paint too rosy a picture. Mistakes were made. Some things just did not work. We were better in some areas than others. For example, resolve as I might each year to have school letters and documents translated into the first languages of our pupils, I never seemed to manage it properly. I either forgot or left it too late. Almost all of us would

occasionally find ourselves making stereotypical assumptions in spite of our serious intentions. We were not able to provide the specialist language help that many of our pupils needed to get them to the point where they were on an equal footing with everyone else. And so on. Nevertheless, change took place.

After two years of working across the school in the sorts of ways I have described, we were eventually able to produce a multi-cultural, anti-racist policy statement which was agreed by all the staff and accepted by the parents' group and community users' group. It may be that some schools begin by producing a policy statement but the long route which we took may be the better one. The whole school had contributed to the formation of the policy and, therefore were committed to it. Work on gender issues began during this period and a gender policy statement also took at least two years. In fact, it did not appear until after I had left the school.

In conclusion, therefore, the key points in the process were as follows:

- giving the issue priority and status within the school
- allocating regular time for work to be done on it
- providing support from among the staff themselves as well as from outside
- tackling it on all fronts and across all groups
- producing a policy statement
- monitoring and improving what was being done.

Finally, it is important at all times to acknowledge and give credit to the people who are actually doing the work – everyone who makes an effort, who recognises that change is needed, who tries to amend their practice in the light of new understanding.

10
EQUALITY IN EDUCATION – OLD DILEMMAS AND NEW POSSIBILITIES

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CLASS, RACE & GENDER: THREE IN ONE

In Chapter 1 we made it clear that the major part of this volume would be structured so as to give issues of class, race and gender relatively *separate* consideration. Our argument was that we did not wish to risk glossing over experiences which might have particular salience for one area but would not be characteristic of all three. For example, it is clear that much of the emphasis in the discussion of class is about levels of achievement in school; but performance problems of that kind are clearly not associated with being a girl and only in complex ways with being a member of an ethnic minority. We are conscious, however, that there are crucially important common concepts across the three, and that any campaign for equality and justice in education has to look for the integration of the field if it is to have a major impact and that, in practice this may be extremely difficult to achieve.

The main purpose of this final chapter is to try to bring together some of the earlier chapters' ideas and contributions to the debate about the ways forward to a more socially just education system. Our concern is to maintain the lines of communication between researchers and teachers not only open but also transmitting helpful messages.

SOCIAL CLASS & DIFFERENCES IN ACHIEVEMENT

It has been argued by many (and by no means do they all come from the political Right) that social class as an explanation of educational success or failure is unhelpful because it says nothing about what can be done about differences in levels of achievement. It is, therefore, advantageous to move on, as Lindsay Paterson has done in Chapter 2, to look at the relevant social characteristics of pupils which make up what was formerly identified as the middle class/working class dichotomy.

It is clear that low academic achievement in school tends to go along with low levels of material resources in the family, inadequate housing, large family size and stress or other ill-health. Furthermore, the effect is exacerbated where children are in a community with an ethos of low expectations whether from peers, adults or teachers. This draws attention to the need to look at social groups as well as individual families; while the absolute measure of social advantage of the community may be important, it may be its status relative to its near neighbours that is the crucial factor.

Overall, parental education appears to be one of the most important factors in relation to achievement. We are reminded, however, not to assume a perfect correlation between cultural and material resources. This accords with the findings of Tizard, Schofield and Hewison[1] that children who are given extra help in reading by their parents make better progress than those who are not, regardless of parental occupation.

Tizard, Schofield & Hewison, 1982

Where family cultural *and* material resources are low, pupils are at a special disadvantage. In David Hughes' view this has been made worse by some curriculum changes such as the move towards more coursework in Standard Grade. Those whose homes lack space, peace and quiet, computers, money for field trips and well educated parents, will be penalised by the move towards more work having to be done at home. But because he values the educational worth of the change from the traditional pattern of classwork plus formal examination, he acknowledges the dilemma faced by the teaching profession.

We emerge from this discussion of class and achievement without a clear agenda of what those in education can do to counter the inequalities of class. On the one hand, there is a sense in which this 'problem' is too big for educationists alone to resolve. Teachers clearly must endeavour to avoid self-fulfilling prophecies and there is an obvious priority for research to explore ways in which parents might provide more effective support for their children. Almost every teacher within the maintained sector of education is faced with pupils from the whole spectrum of social class, differences in achievement levels is an issue which will not go away and the case for much closer consideration at a detailed level, possibly through action-research on classrooms in collaboration with teachers and parents, is well made.

ETHNICITY & EDUCATION

To some extent the studies of race and education have, like those on class and education, concentrated on patterns of achievement. David Gillborn has warned us however, to be cautious about interpretation of the quantitative data collected during the last decade on the achievement of ethnic minority groups. There are substantial dangers lurking of covert assumptions which may be invalid, lack of control of important variables in analyses (particularly social class and groups within groups), and the promotion of unwarranted stereotypes which may be profoundly damaging through their influence on peoples' expectations of individual children. In particular, talk of 'underachievement' of some groups is seen as simple-minded and supportive of a 'blame the victim' approach rather than ascribing failure to the education system.

There is something of a gospel of despair in the various accounts of racism and institutional racism in the sense that even with the best of intentions actions can so easily be interpreted as against the interests of some ethnic group. The complete absence in the commentaries of examples of what might be called 'good practice' is alarming, as is the plethora of illustrations of what

are seen as teachers' failures to recognise white racism and so to let it pass unchallenged and tacitly accepted. Even where schools take seriously their anti-racist policies they are still liable, it appears, to put these policies into practice in racist ways.

The alarm about this state of affairs is of three kinds. First, it is extremely disturbing that things are, and continue to be, as bad as they are. The damaging effects of stereotyping and the continuing crunch of racial incidents have been effectively illustrated. The second cause for concern is how little we seem to understand about the basis of good inter-ethnic relations. We are unlikely to be able to plan effective strategies for the future unless we improve our understanding not just of what goes wrong, but also of what works out well. A third source of anxiety must be the question of whether anything can be done to improve things. For improvement to happen, it is necessary in some way to build on existing strengths. But are there any such strengths in the education system and, if so, what do they look like? David Gillborn has called for dialogue among policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and ethnic minority communities to identify such strengths. Rowena Arshad takes a different view. For her professional dialogue will 'merely make symbolic gestures and tinker round the edges' and she calls for a more radical challenge of power structures within educational institutions. Whether teachers are prepared, now, or in the future, for the kind of struggle she advocates must be in some doubt.

Given the somewhat gloomy prognosis presented by our contributors, it is critical that some kinds of positive models for action are available, and as a start we could think about examples at three levels: ethnic monitoring, multi-cultural and anti-racist policies and exemplars for practice.

Further Education Unit, 1992

The first of these is illustrated by the Further Education Unit paper: *Ethnic Monitoring and its Uses in Colleges.*[2] This suggests that the collection and analysis of student ethnic background data is a tool which is instrumental towards ensuring equal opportunities because it provides the institution with a clear and objective picture of how it is currently performing. However, monitoring in itself is only a preparation – it does not constitute action. Such action is dependent on people changing their practices of their own accord or in response to policy initiatives.

Helene Witcher's contribution to this collection (Chapter 5) provides a clear example of a policy initiative. This is particularly interesting, set as it is in a part of the country where the minority ethnic population is small – circumstances under which awareness of anti-racism is likely to be at a very low level. Just as the all-boys school can be such a fertile ground for the development of sexist attitudes, so the all-white environment can foster a particularly insidious form of racism. This example of an anti-racist policy has two distinctive characteristics: the policy itself is brief and the guidelines identify 'key issues' which have a ring of familiarity. It has been recognised that unless equal opportunities policies take account of what teachers know and how they think, their chances of success will be slim.

The introduction by educational managers of a policy document is a start.

but only a start, to changes of practice. The Regional strategy for encouraging such change described has both a proactive and a reactive approach. The former endeavours to get everyone thinking about multi-culturalism and anti-racism through staff development and evaluation; the latter sets about providing a framework for response to racist incidents. If we assume that a two strand approach of this kind is effective, we could find ourselves in the position of facing dissatisfied customers (teachers) who are motivated to change but are looking in vain for appropriate school or classroom strategies to achieve their goals of non-discriminatory education.

This dissatisfaction could be addressed by the provision of a central resource of ideas for use in educating young people. Rowena Arshad in Chapter 8, for example, suggests that tasks which encourage 'students to examine the significance of gender, ethnicity and class in their own lives' could lead to a critical awareness of themselves and others in our multi-cultural society. We are conscious, however, that the papers in this collection have not provided much in the way of practical examples other than this one to stock such a resource of ideas for teachers. This is an area which requires further development in the future.

GENDER STEREOTYPING IN EDUCATION

The concern about achievements in school which has dominated the debate on social class and had an impact on that about race and education, is far less salient in discussion of gender. Because girls' performance tends to be comparable with or better than boys, the focus is on other matters. The essential problem is one of stereotyping in the curriculum, careers and general expectations, and the 'problem' is one of how to break the mould.

There are, of course, hopeful signs. Some Regional authorities and teachers' organisations have anti-sexist policies and declare opposition to sex-stereotyping. A particularly welcome development is the GTC policy document *Gender in Education*,[3] which offers its own advice to schools and training institutions as a contribution to the 'real cultural change in schools' which Sheila Riddell calls for. In looking at how things are with regard to gender in the education system of the early 1990s, both Sheila Riddell and Sheena Erskine point to unease about apparently neutral, non-discriminatory, equal opportunities stances. Those stances essentially take the status quo (on such things as curriculum content, for example) as given, and look for ways in which women can 'fit in' better to achieve equality. A recent example of this is the lucid paper by Cole and others,[4] which views with alarm the low and declining ratio of girls to boys undertaking computing studies in Scottish secondary schools. The document is a practical guide for teachers and the authors argue :

[3] *General Teaching Council for Scotland, 1991*

[4] *Cole et al, 1992*

> It is not inevitable that computing in schools should become a bastion of male domination, and neither is it yet too late to act on behalf of equal opportunity in this important area of Scottish education.

This kind of equal opportunities approach is welcomed by many people but is seen by those who take an alternative anti-sexist stance as insufficiently challenging to male norms and ways of construing the world. The General Teaching Council's policy document takes explicit account of this alternative view, stating :

> it is important that girls are not seen as 'deficient boys' who can be turned into surrogate males. The Council believes that effective equality policies must embrace the concept of anti-sexism ... This implies that schools should take steps to challenge traditional attitudes in a number of ways. Girls, for example, need to be encouraged to see themselves as people capable of holding positions of authority in all areas of life.

In early 1992 in Scotland, however, the opportunities for girls to see models of women in authority, or in positions where they control decision-making on the structure and substance of the school curriculum, are meagre. Whether one looks to the steering groups of the 5 to 14 programme, or to the Howie Committee which is likely to influence profoundly the shape of secondary education, the gender imbalance is startling (at least 6:1) and the senior positions are entirely in male hands. The picture is the same in education authorities (still no woman director of education and only one as a depute); in senior management in educational institutions at all levels except primary schools (and even there 37% of the men are employed as headteachers compared with 7.5% of the women); and in Her Majesty's Inspectorate where yet another round of appointments of HM Chief Inspectors has maintained the 100% male record. Where women have been successful in attaining positions of authority in education, they often tend to be regarded as out of the ordinary, especially competent, prepared to sacrifice other parts of their life (especially family) or odd and eccentric. The idea that there could be as many ordinary women as there are ordinary (or even incompetent) men in such positions is still a foreign notion to most people of both sexes.

If the composition of the educational establishment is unhelpful in encouraging girls 'to see themselves as people capable of holding positions of authority in all areas of life', will that encouragement come from teachers or parents? In Chapter 7 Sheena Erskine expresses some doubts that either of these groups will take the lead. She comments on how rarely teachers have raised gender issues with her and documents the enduring gender differences in parents' aspirations for, and evaluations of, their sons and daughters. In looking at an example of policy into practice, she also draws our attention to the increasing influence of employers on young people while they are still at school. In COMPACT initiatives and other work experience schemes, the gender stereotypes of occupations may well have an even greater impact on pupils' thinking than before. She emphasises the importance of systematic school evaluation, as a dialogue rather than a judgmental report, to encourage the raising of awareness and the continuing scrutiny of practice to root out anti-sexist materials and behaviour whether in the classroom, playground or staff room.

SCHOOL-BASED INITIATIVES AS A MEANS OF TACKLING INEQUALITY

Contributors to this collection have reminded us of the difficulties faced by those committed to achieving greater equality in the education system, given the apathy of central government and the ambivalence or hostility of many teachers. Margaret Macintosh (Chapter 9) goes some way to dispelling the gloom, giving us a convincing model of how a particular school may act to alter its existing climate. Her emphases on raising awareness in sensitive ways, involving everyone in the school and recognising all efforts made, no matter by whom, provide a telling account of the conditions necessary for a school to develop, invest in and establish a sense of ownership of innovative thinking about equality. Once a new way of looking at things is established, ideas for appropriate classroom and school strategies may well come from within the school in a prolific way.

In our view, school-based initiatives of this kind are the essential core for change. But there continues to be a role for those outside the school. Schools have to be encouraged to undertake such developments and rewarded for doing so. And the provision centrally of resources offering ideas of how to carry through to the classroom the new ways of thinking will be invaluable once awareness is raised and there is active concern among teachers about how to change the way things are.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this collection, we have been reminded of the forces within the education system which perpetuate inequality and the barriers to change. However, it would be wrong to conclude that all paths forward are blocked. In Chapter 1, we suggested that there was now general acceptance of a political agenda based on the principles of public accountability and individual choice, but that this did not necessarily imply the end of a concern for social justice. However, new strategies are necessary to ensure that collective welfare is not swamped by unconstrained individualism. Educationalists will have to ensure that social justice issues are addressed in the context of working with parents, developing new approaches to teaching and learning, monitoring pupil progress and assessing school effectiveness. In the absence of a firm lead from central government, we believe it is particularly important for education authorities and bodies such as the GTC to offer support and advice and it is heartening that they are taking up this challenge.

There is also a need to shift the emphasis in research from the documentation of failure to an analysis of the conditions which lead to good practice in the area of class, ethnicity and gender. Such studies would not only provide encouragement and support to practitioners, but would also enable us to be far more rigorous in defining the nature of equality for which we are striving.

One striking and persistent theme throughout this collection of papers has been the myths of Scottish education. The 'lad o pairts' and the 'classless society' were dealt short shrift by Lindsay Paterson and David Hughes. Margaret Macintosh commented on the complacency of judgments on Scottish schools as 'even handed places where anyone who applies herself or

himself will do as well as the next person'. The 'it doesn't happen here' approach was seen by Rowena Arshad as a fundamental problem for matters of social justice. And Sheila Riddell documented the gender inequality which is embedded in a so-called excellent, meritocratic, egalitarian, progressive and enlightened system.

This book is not intended, of course, as a destroyer of dreams about Scottish education or anything else. Its aims are to stimulate greater awareness and debate in our system of education about the very important matters of equality, especially in relation to class, ethnicity and gender. The resort to discussion of myths is to jolt the system out of the cosy perception that Scottish education is above suspicion on issues of discrimination. It is not, but it can do something about that and in so doing make a major contribution to the world of education more generally, as it has in the past in so many other spheres of learning.

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RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

ARORA, R. K. & DUNCAN, C. G. (1986) *Multi-cultural Education: towards good practice.* Routledge.

This book provides useful insights into ways in which multi-cultural education may be used as a stage on the way to anti-racism.

COLE, M. (ed) (1989) *The Social Contexts of Schooling.* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Written for teachers and student teachers, the papers in this collection provide good background information for those concerned with social justice issues in education. The volume covers the history of mass-schooling and considers class, gender and race generally and in relation to schooling specifically. The chapter on structural discrimination in testing is particularly interesting.

COLE, M. (ed) (1989) *Education for Equality: some guidelines for good practice.* Routledge.

This is the companion volume to the above text, and provides examples of good practice with regard to the promotion of equality in the areas of class, race and gender.

FEWELL, J. & PATERSON, F. (eds) (1990) *Girls in their Prime: Scottish education revisited.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Containing both historical and contemporary papers, this book focuses on the experience of girls and women in Scottish education. The historical roots of gender inequality are revealed and contemporary accounts suggest that much work remains to be done in raising awareness and challenging complacency.

GILLBORN, D. (1990) *'Race', Ethnicity and Education: teaching and learning in multi-ethnic schools.* Routledge.

This is an excellent text to consult in order to clarify terminology in the area of multi-cultural/anti-racist education. It also presents data from Gillborn's study of the construction of pupil identity in a multi-ethnic school.

GRUGEON, E. & WOODS, P. (1990) *Educating All: multi-cultural perspectives in the primary school.* Routledge.

The authors evaluate approaches to multi-cultural education in primary schools, considering their relationship to pupil learning and development. These include whole-school projects in mathematics, environmental studies and a school exchange. Pupil experiences at certain key stages are also explored, such as beginning school, being statemented and transition between schools.

MYERS, K. (1987) *Genderwatch! Self-assessment Measures for Use in Schools.* School Curriculum Development Committee Publications.

This is a set of self-assessment schedules for use in schools wishing to monitor their success in providing a climate conducive to gender equality. The schedules cover three stages, setting goals, addressing specific issues and addressing specific subject areas. The schedules are straightforward to use and could be incorporated usefully into the process of school development planning.

The original version of Genderwatch! is now out of print, but a revised edition, published by Cambridge University Press, is forthcoming. For further details contact: CUP, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU.

RIDDELL, S. & BROWN, S. (eds) (1991) *School Effectiveness Research: its messages for school improvement.* Edinburgh: HMSO.

This collection of papers summarises research findings concerning within-school factors affecting pupil progress. Of particular interest to those who wish to promote the educational success of working class children.

ROGERS, R. (ed) (1986) *Education and Social Class.* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Books on social class and education have become increasingly rare. This is a useful collection of papers summarising the relationship between school class and educational outcome.

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Class, Race and Gender in Schools

Emeritus Professor Alan Brown & Dr Sheila Riddell of Stirling University

Throughout education, there is growing awareness of questions about social justice. This book sets out to inform the debate through providing research evidence and reflections on practice relevant to equality in education, specifically in relation to class, race, and gender. It aims also to stimulate greater awareness, further research, and informed action.

The book is based on a round table conference of researchers and practitioners organised by the Educational Institute of Scotland at which summaries of relevant research were juxtaposed with papers from practitioners offering their personal perspectives.

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The Scottish Council for Research in Education